Bug Bites

Mosquitoes, flies, fleas, bedbugs, black flies, sand flies, spiders, ticks and many other insects can bite. Insect bites are different from insect stings. A sting is when venom is injected into the skin. Most of the time bug bites redden, swell up and itch for 2 to 4 days, and then go away. First aid for most bug bites includes washing the area thoroughly with soap and water. You may use ice or a cold pack to reduce the swelling. You can also apply a small amount of meat tenderizer or baking soda paste to the bite area for a short period. **Keep the area clean and do not scratch when it itches.** You can reduce the itching and swelling by applying a cortisone cream or calamine to the bite area 4 times a day. Antihistamine and cortisone medicines may be used to relieve symptoms.

Some insect bites can transmit infectious diseases, for example: ticks (Lyme disease) and mosquitoes (West Nile virus).

Bug bites can get infected or cause you to become ill. If the area near the bite becomes more swollen, red, or painful over the next 2 days, you may need to start antibiotics.

YOU MIGHT NEED A TETANUS SHOT NOW IF:

- You have no idea when you had the last one.
- You have never had a tetanus shot before.
- Your bite has dirt in it.
- If you need a tetanus shot, and you decide not to get one, there is a rare chance of getting tetanus. Sickness from tetanus can be serious.

If you got a tetanus shot, your arm may swell, get red and warm to the touch at the shot site. This is common and not a problem.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- There is increased pain, redness or swelling in the bite area or a red streak develops on the skin near the bite area.
- You or your child has an oral temperature above 102° F (38.9° C), not controlled by medicine.
- Your baby is older than 3 months with a rectal temperature of 102º F (38.9º C) or higher.
- **Your baby is 3 months old or younger with a rectal temperature of 100.4º F (38º C) or higher.**
- You or your child develops new joint pain.
- You or your child develops a headache or neck pain.
- You or your child develops unusual weakness or loss of strength.
- You or your child develops a rash.

Document Released: 01/25/2006 Document Re-Released: 03/14/2011
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