Bite, Black Widow Spider

You may have been bitten by a Black Widow spider. If you were allowed to go home today, your caregiver feels that a significant reaction will not occur. Follow these instructions to prevent possible reactions. Symptoms usually develop in 15 minutes to 2 hours with muscle cramps locally and progressing to generalized symptoms. These symptoms usually peak in 3 hours to 1 day. The adult female has a black body about a ½ inch (2.5cm) long with an orange-red hourglass figure on its belly.

Black Widow

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Avoid scratching the bite area. Keep the area clean and covered with an adhesive bandage or sterile gauze bandage.
- Wash the area daily in warm soapy water, or other antiseptic solution 3 times per day or as needed to keep clean.
- Apply an ice pack or cool compress for 20 minutes 4 times per day minutes for the first 2 days or as needed to keep swelling down. Keep the bite area raised above the level of your heart. This also helps reduce redness and swelling. **DO NOT** use heat. Anti-venom is available if necessary.
- 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 had 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 medical attention if there is pain, soreness and redness (*inflammation*), swelling or drainage from the wound site.
- Seek care if an oral temperature above 102° F (38.9° C) develops, or as your caregiver suggests.
- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You develop muscular or belly (*abdominal*) pain or cramps.
- You develop rapid breathing, a rapid heart rate, become extremely restless, or confused.
- You feel faint, become lightheaded, or you are not feeling well throughout your body (*malaise*).

FATALITIES DO RESULT FROM BLACK WIDOW SPIDER BITES. ANY OF THE ABOVE SYMPTOMS REQUIRE HOSPITALIZATION.

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

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