



BUG BITES

Mosquitos, bees, wasps, hornets, ants, ticks, fleas, bed bugs, spiders, OH MY!

There are lots of creepy-crawlies out there, and **some carry diseases** (like mosquitos and ticks), **some can cause allergic reactions** (like bees, wasps, yellow jackets, hornets, or fire ants), **and some cause severe disease** (like spider and scorpion envenomation). This is a quick reference to learn more about common insect bites and stings and what to do about them.



Common symptoms of bug bites:

- Itching, pain
- Redness
- Pimple-like spots or bumps
- Mild to moderate swelling
- Warmth at the sting site

Signs of an allergic reaction:

- Difficulty breathing
- Hives that appear as a red, itchy rash that spreads beyond the area of the sting
- Swelling of the face, throat, or mouth
- Wheezing or difficulty swallowing
- Restlessness and anxiety
- Rapid pulse
- Dizziness or a sharp drop in blood pressure

This type of reaction can escalate quickly, and even cause death. If you or someone nearby exhibit these symptoms, **act fast and call 911!**

What diseases do insects carry?

- **Ticks** can carry Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever and Lyme disease; they are most commonly found in grassy and wooded areas.
- **Mosquitos** in the U.S. carry West Nile Virus and a few types of Encephalitis, but around the world they carry even more serious diseases.

Most important things for you to know:

- If a victim has a **history of an allergic reaction or is bitten in the face, mouth, throat, or if a bee or wasp is swallowed, medical care is needed immediately.**
- In general, if you notice something you're concerned may be an unidentified insect bite or sting, **call us at 574-631-7497 to talk to a triage nurse.**
- **There are multiple ways to prevent bug bites.** Here are a few:
 - Wear clothes that cover exposed skin (pants, long sleeves, socks and shoes)
 - Watch where you walk: avoid walking through foliage or on insect nests
 - Consider wearing insect repellent on exposed skin (DEET is an effective repellent, but is a pesticide by nature and has it's own side effects and risks)

How to treat a bug bite or sting:

- If stung on the hand, remove any rings from fingers immediately
- Use Over-the-counter medications to reduce symptoms:
 - Itching, swelling, and hives: oral antihistamine (Benadryl)
 - Inflammation and pain: analgesic (ibuprofen/Advil or acetaminophen/Tylenol)
 - Itching and irritation: soothing ointment (hydrocortisone cream or calamine lotion)
- To remove a stinger:
 - Clean wound, then gently scrape out with fingernail or credit card
 - Do not pull the stinger out as this would release more venom
- To remove a tick:
 - Grasp the tick as close to the skin surface as possible with fine-tipped tweezers.
 - Pull the tick straight out slowly.
 - Wash and treat the bite area with a disinfectant.
 - Any other techniques or home remedies could make it worse.

Check out the latest updates and more details from **the CDC:**



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