

Bee or Yellow Jacket Sting

Definition

- Stung by a honeybee, bumblebee, hornet, wasp, or yellow jacket
- Over 95 percent of stings are from honey bees or yellow jackets
- The main symptoms are pain and redness

Health Information

Symptoms

- The main symptoms are pain, itching, swelling and redness at the sting site.
- Severe pain or burning at the site lasts 1 to 2 hours. Itching often follows the pain.
- **Swelling.** The bee sting may swell for 48 hours after the sting. The swelling can be small or large. Stings on the face can cause a lot of swelling around the eye. It looks bad, but this is not serious.
- **Redness.** Bee stings are often red. That doesn't mean they are infected. Infections rarely happen with stings.
- The redness can last 3 days and the swelling 7 days.

Cause

- The bee's stinger injects venom into the skin.
- The venom is what causes the symptoms.

Prevention of Bee Stings

- Don't go barefoot if bees are around.
- Be careful in gardens and orchards.
- Insect repellents do not work against these stinging insects.

Care Advice

1. Overview:

- Bee stings are common.
- The main symptoms are pain and redness.
- The swelling can be large. This does not mean it's an allergy.
- Here is some care advice that should help.

2. Try to Remove the Stinger (if present):

- Only honey bees leave a stinger.
- The stinger looks like a tiny black dot in the sting.
- Use a fingernail or credit card edge to scrape it off.
- If the stinger is below the skin surface, leave it alone. It will come out with normal skin shedding.

3. Meat Tenderizer:

- Make a meat tenderizer paste with a little water. Use a cotton ball to rub it on the sting. Do this once for 20 minutes. Reason: This may neutralize the venom and reduce the pain and swelling. Caution: Do not use near the eye.
- If you don't have any, rub on an aluminum-based deodorant. You can also put a baking soda paste on the sting. Do this for 20 minutes.

4. **Cold Pack:**
 - If pain does not improve after using the meat tenderizer paste, rub with an ice cube.
 - Do this for 20 minutes.
5. **Pain Medicine:**
 - To help with the pain, give acetaminophen (such as Tylenol) or ibuprofen. Use as needed.
6. **Steroid Cream:**
 - For itching or swelling, put 1% hydrocortisone cream on the sting. No prescription is needed.
 - Use 3 times per day.
7. **Allergy Medicine for Itching:**
 - If itching becomes severe, give a dose of Benadryl.
 - No prescription needed. Age limit: 1 year and older.
8. **What to Expect:**
 - Severe pain or burning at the site lasts 1 to 2 hours.
 - Normal swelling from venom can increase for 48 hours after the sting.
 - The redness can last 3 days.
 - The swelling can last 7 days.

Call Your Doctor If

- Trouble breathing or swallowing occurs (mainly during the 2 hours after the sting.) **Call 911.**
- Sting starts to look infected
- Redness gets larger after 2 days
- Swelling becomes huge
- You think your child needs to be seen
- Your child becomes worse

Pediatric Care Advice

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