

Spider Bite

Definition

- Bite from a spider

Health Information

Symptoms

- Redness, pain, swelling of the bite
- Helpful if spider seen on the skin or around the child

Types of Spider Bites

Minor Spider Bites That Are Not Dangerous

- More than 50 spiders in the U.S. have venom.
- Their bites can cause reactions that aren't serious. This includes pain or redness at the bite site.
- The bites are painful and swollen. This lasts for 1 or 2 days. They can feel and look like a bee sting.
- Some single, unexplained, tender bites that occur during the night are due to spiders.
- In the U.S., there are only 2 species of spiders that can cause serious reactions. They are the Black Widow spider and the Brown Recluse spider.

Black Widow Spider Bite

- A shiny, jet-black spider with long legs (total size 1 inch or 2.5 cm).
- A red (or orange) hourglass-shaped marking on its under-side.
- Causes immediate local pain and swelling.
- Sometimes, you can see 2 fang marks at the bite site.
- Severe muscle cramps (especially stomach cramps) occur within 1 to 6 hours. These last 24 to 48 hours.
- Rarely causes death. (EXCEPTION: bitten by several spiders or small child is bitten)
- Note: Many are dry bites because the fangs are small.
- Treatment: Go to ER Now. Reason: Black widow antivenin may be needed.
- The brown widow spider is related to the black widow. It is found in southern US.
- Brown widow spider bites are treated the same as black widow bites.

Brown Recluse Spider Bite

- A brown spider with long legs (total size 1/2 inch or 12 mm).
- A dark violin shaped marking on top of its head.
- Causes pain at the bite. Blisters form within 4 to 8 hours.
- The center becomes bluish and depressed (crater-like) over 2 to 3 days.
- Skin damage may require skin grafting in 10% of cases.
- Other symptoms such as fever, vomiting, muscle pain can occur. No life-threatening symptoms occur.
- Brown recluse spiders are hard to identify. If you can, bring the spider along in a jar.

Prevention of Spider Bites

- Wear gloves when working outdoors.
- Use an insect repellent. DEET repels spiders as well as insects.
- The AAP approves DEET use over 2 months old. Use 30% DEET or less. Use 30% DEET if you need 6 hours of protection. Use 10% DEET if you only need protection for 2 hours.
- Don't put DEET on the hands if your child sucks their thumb or fingers. (Reason: Prevent swallowing

DEET)

- Warn older children who apply their own DEET to use less. A total of 3 or 4 drops can protect the whole body.
- Put on exposed areas of skin. Do not use near eyes or mouth. Don't use on skin that is covered by clothing. Don't put DEET on sunburns or rashes. (Reason: DEET can be easily absorbed in these areas.)
- Wash it off with soap and water when your child comes indoors.
- Caution: DEET can damage clothing made of man-made fibers. It can also damage plastics (eye glasses) and leather. DEET can be used on cotton clothing.

Care Advice

1. Overview:

- Most spider bites look and feel like a bee sting.
- They are harmless and go away on their own.
- The main symptoms are pain and redness.
- Here is some care advice that should help.

2. Cleansing:

- Wash the bite well with soap and water.

3. Cold Pack:

- For pain or swelling, use a cold pack. You can also use ice wrapped in a wet cloth.
- Put it on the bite for 20 minutes.

4. Pain Medicine:

- To help with the pain, give acetaminophen (such as Tylenol) or ibuprofen. Use as needed.

5. What to Expect:

- The swelling and pain lasts for 1 to 2 days.
- It should not be any worse than a bee sting.

Call Your Doctor If

- Severe bite pain lasts more than 2 hours after pain medicine
- Stomach pains or muscle cramps occur
- Bite pain lasts more than 2 days (48 hours)
- Bite starts to look infected
- You think your child needs to be seen
- Your child becomes worse

Pediatric Care Advice

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