

Dr. Annie's Insect 411

Knowing the risks and treatments can save your life!

Summer...we all look forward to outdoor activities such as swimming, baseball, basketball and barbecues. However, there is also an influx of stinging insects like wasps, honey bees, hornets and yellow jackets etc.

For those who have severe allergic reactions to stinging insects, enjoying the outdoors and keeping safe can be challenging. Knowing about stinging insects, how to prevent and treat insect stings will help alleviate their fears and make summer more enjoyable.

What is an allergic reaction to stinging insects? Up to 5% of Americans are at risk for a severe, potentially life-threatening allergic reaction from insect stings. This reaction is called an anaphylaxis.

ALLERGIC SYMPTOMS MAY INCLUDE:

- Generalized hives
- Swelling of the face, lips, tongue, throat etc.
- Chest tightness and wheezing
- Nausea, abdominal cramps and diarrhea
- Dizziness, rapid fall in blood pressure, collapse and sometimes death



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- Non allergic reactions include:
Redness, swelling and/or itching at the sting.

PREVENTING STINGS:

- Stinging insects are most likely to sting if their nests are disturbed. They are attracted to brightly colored clothes, fragrances, the smell of food, sweet drinks like soda and juice.
- Stay away from their nests, remove nests from around your home and avoid bright colors and fragrances when outdoors.
- Keep all food and drinks covered. Avoid wearing loose-fitting clothing and always wear closed-toe shoes.
- If you do get stung or come in contact with stinging insects remain calm and move slowly away. Do not run or scream as these make the insects more aggressive and they sting more.

TREATING STINGS:

- Stinging insects may leave their stingers in you.
- Stingers are slender straw-like structures with sacs at the end.

STAY CALM:

- Try to remove the stinger within 30 seconds.
- Use the edge of a credit card or your finger nail

in a flicking motion to remove the stinger and its associated sac.

- Raise affected limb and apply a cold compress to reduce swelling/pain.
 - Clean area with soap and water.
 - Apply topical steroid ointment or oral antihistamines to relieve itching.
 - For severe reactions and anaphylaxis, use injectable Epinephrine and Call 911.
- DON'T:
- Never squeeze, suck or massage the sting site.
 - Never break any blisters.

If you are severely allergic to stinging insects, always carry Epinephrine and know when and how to use it. Let friends and family members know about your reaction to stinging insects and how to help prevent and treat the reaction. Wearing a medical alert bracelet could be life saving especially for children.

If you have had an allergic insect sting reaction, it is imperative that you contact a specialist in allergy and immunology for evaluation and management.

HERE ARE OUR AREA'S MOST COMMON STINGING INSECTS



From Left to right: Yellow Jacket, Honey bee, paper wasp, hornet, fire ant.

free

Yourselves from allergy, asthma and immune system problems!
Do you or your loved one suffer from...

- Headaches
- Sinus Infections
- Frequent Diarrhea
- Wheezing
- Mouth Breathing
- Rashes
- Watery Eyes
- Throat Clearing
- Swelling
- Sneezing
- Frequent Cough
- Chronic Congestion
- Asthma
- Pneumonia
- Recurrent Abdominal Pain
- Runny Nose
- Recurrent Abdominal Pain
- Bronchitis

If you answered YES to any of these symptoms you or your loved one may have allergies, asthma or immune system problems.

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