

## TAKING THE STING OUT OF STINGING INSECTS



### TYPES OF STINGING INSECTS

They include honeybees, bumble bees, yellow jackets, hornets, wasps, and fire ants.

### PREVENTION TIPS

Stinging incidents often occur when nesting areas of these social insects are disturbed. Be aware of the area around you. If you see insects flying to and from a particular place, avoid it.

If you are going to be in an area where disturbing a nest is likely, wear long pants and a long sleeved shirt. Insect repellent applied to your skin or clothing will not deter these stinging insects.

Wear light colored clothing. Remain as calm as possible if a bee or wasp lands on your skin. If you don't want to wait for it to leave, gently and slowly brush it away.

It is best not to wear perfume, cologne, or other scented soaps or scented shampoos as this attracts bees and wasps.

### TREATMENT TIPS

Gently scrape the area of the bite using a blunt object like a fingernail or a credit card to remove the stinger. If removed within 15 seconds of the sting, the severity of the sting is reduced.

Try not to rub or scratch the sting site after the stinger is removed.

Wash the sting site with soap and water. Apply a cold or ice pack wrapped in cloth for a few minutes.

If the sting is followed by severe symptoms or if it occurs on the neck or mouth, seek medical attention immediately.

A person with a history of severe allergic reaction to an insect sting may be advised by their physician to carry an insect sting allergy kit to counteract the allergic reaction whenever they may encounter stinging insects. Also they should consider wearing a medical ID bracelet.

### TYPES OF ALLERGIC REACTIONS

An allergic reaction may be categorized as normal, local or systemic. The following information describes the symptoms of each reaction.

A normal reaction to a sting is pain, swelling in the area of the sting and itching. These symptoms may go away in a few hours. However an allergic reaction is more severe and can result in a life-threatening event.

A local allergic reaction is a huge swelling, which develops over 24 hours or more and can take a week or more to go down.

A systemic reaction goes through your whole system and causes hives all over the body, trouble breathing, or dizziness which can lead to shock or unconsciousness. This reaction requires immediate medical attention and is known as anaphylaxis.

### DESENSITIZATION PROGRAM

Only a very limited portion of the population is allergic to bee or wasp stings (one to two people out of 1000). An allergist is the specialist to prescribe treatments known as immunotherapy to help treat future reactions to bee or wasp stings.