

## Bee / Wasp stings

For most insect stings, home treatment is adequate. Multiple stings or an allergic reaction can be a medical emergency that requires immediate treatment. **Call 911** for serious reactions or any trouble breathing.

## Steps for treating a sting:

- Remove the stinger quickly. Scrape across the skin with a credit card or try to remove the stinger with your fingernail or tweezers.
- Apply a paste of powdered meat tenderizer or baking soda mixed with water. (Papain, the
  enzyme in meat tenderizer, breaks down the protein in bee-venom responsible for the pain
  and itching.) Don't leave this on for more than 30 minutes, or it may irritate the skin.
- Apply ice or a cold pack for 20 minutes after the sting. This helps block an allergic response.
- Give a dose of **Benadryl.** This can help prevent the reaction from spreading.
- After 20 minutes, wash again: Remove ice and wash the area with soap and cold water.
- Topical hydrocortisone can also provide some symptomatic relief. Apply 2-3 times per day.
- To prevent infection, apply a triple-antibiotic ointment like Neosporin 2-3 times per day.
- Give acetaminophen or ibuprofen for systemic pain relief.
- Avoid scratching the sting area. This will worsen itching and swelling and increase your risk of infection.

In most cases, the pain will decrease within 2 hours, although swelling may not be apparent until the next day. Local reactions at the site of the sting can start 12 to 36 hours later and can last for up to a week. Contact a Doctor if the reaction continues to spread or there is a systemic reaction. Systemic reactions such as hives, redness, or swelling elsewhere on the body (face, throat, eyes, lips), vomiting, dizziness, disorientation, tightness in the throat or difficulty breathing, should receive prompt medical care. Be sure to see a doctor if there were 10 or more stings, or if one of the stings was inside the nose or mouth, since swelling can interfere with breathing.

If the person who was stung carries an Epipen, use the Epipen immediately as directed and call **911.** When the emergency personnel arrive, inform them that an Epipen has been administered.

## Items to Pack for a Bee/Wasp Sting Treatment Package Include:

- A baggie with 1 tablespoon of powdered meat tenderizer or baking soda.
- One dose of Benadryl and one dose of Ibuprofen and/or Tylenol.