

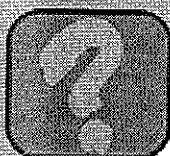
# Insect Stings



Although insect stings can be irritating, symptoms usually begin to disappear by the next day and don't require treatment by a doctor. However, kids who are highly allergic to insect stings may have life-threatening symptoms and may require emergency treatment.

## Signs of a Severe Allergic Reaction:

- swelling of the face or mouth
- difficulty swallowing or speaking
- chest tightness, wheezing, or difficulty breathing
- dizziness or fainting
- abdominal pain, nausea, or vomiting



## What to Do:

1. Remove the child from the area where he or she was stung.
2. If the child was stung by a honeybee, wasp, hornet, or yellow jacket, and the stinger is visible, remove it by gently scraping the skin horizontally with the edge of a credit card or your fingernail.
3. Wash the area with soap and water.
4. Apply ice or a cool wet cloth to the area to relieve pain and swelling.
5. If the area is itchy, apply a paste of baking soda and water, or calamine lotion (do not apply calamine to the child's face or genitals).

### Call the child's doctor if:

- there's swelling or redness beyond the sting site
- the site looks infected (increasing redness, warmth, swelling, pain, or pus occurring several hours or longer after the sting)

### Seek emergency medical care if:

- the child shows symptoms of a severe allergic reaction
- the sting is anywhere in the mouth
- the child has a known severe allergy to a stinging insect
- injectable epinephrine was used

## Think Prevention!

Try to have the child avoid: walking barefoot while on grass; using scented soaps, perfumes, or hair spray; dressing in bright colors or flowery prints; areas where insects nest or congregate; and drinking from soda cans. Also make sure that outside garbage cans have tight-fitting lids; there are no stagnant pools of water (in rain gutters, flower pots, birdbaths, etc.); and food is covered when eating outside.

Note: All information is for educational purposes only. For specific medical advice, diagnoses, and treatment, consult a doctor. Review this with a doctor prior to use.

Reviewed by: John Bernardi, MD, and Deborah Mulligan-Smith, MD Date reviewed: April 2004

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