

Bee Safety Tips

From yellow jackets to hornets to wasps, there are plenty of pests out there with stingers. If you run into one of them, don't jump around and wave your arms because that will make the bee angrier. Just walk away as calmly and quickly as possible. You may be too close to the bee's nest. If you can't leave, stay very still until the insect flies away. If it's your food or drink the bee, wasp or hornet is after, put down what you are eating/drinking, then walk away calmly (if you don't put it down, the bee will likely follow you!). If you get stung by a honeybee, immediately remove the stinger by scraping the area with a fingernail, credit card or other sharp-edged tool (the honeybee's stinger has little hooks on it to keep it in your skin!). Avoid using tweezers, since squeezing the stinger can actually pump more irritating venom (poison from the attached venom sac at the end of the stinger) into the skin. Get the stinger out as quickly as possible to lessen the amount of venom that gets into the skin and to lessen the reaction, which usually includes swelling, redness, pain and itch. Apply ice to reduce the swelling and apply a topical anesthetic, such as Lanacane® Anti-Itch Creme, to quickly reduce the pain and itch. The swelling will go away if the area is left alone - so don't scratch it!

***IMPORTANT MESSAGE FOR PARENTS!**

If you know your child has a severe allergy to bee stings, you or your child should carry an Epi-Kit to avoid a life-threatening, systemic reaction to a bee, wasp or hornet sting. If a systemic reaction does occur - shortness of breath, swelling of the tongue, vomiting, collapse or loss of consciousness - immediate emergency medical attention is required - call 911! Ask your doctor or local pharmacist about how to obtain an Epi-kit.

Wasps, yellow jackets, bumblebees and hornets can sting repeatedly (unlike honeybees), since their stinger does not come off in the skin. If stung, there will be no stinger to remove, but you should quickly leave the area, since the insect can sting again and again. The reaction will be the same as a normal sting, including swelling, pain and itch.

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