



## Self-care Information

# Insect Bites & Stings

### Treating Insect bites & stings - Tips for adults and children

“Supporting you to look after you & your family”

- Remove sting or tick.
- Wash affected area.
- Apply a cold compress.
- Keep area raised or elevated.
- Try not to scratch.

**Visit your local pharmacy for advice on insect bites and stings.**

### Most insect bites are not serious and can be easily treated at home:

- Remove sting or tick (See [NHS website](#) for details on how to do this safely).
- Wash the affected area with soap and water.
- Apply a cold compress (cloth soaked in cold water) or ice pack (wrapped in a cloth) for at least 10 minutes.
- Keep the area raised or elevated.
- Try not to scratch the bite or sting as it could get infected.
- Do not use home remedies such as vinegar or bicarbonate of soda to treat the bite or sting.

### If symptoms persist speak to your local community pharmacy regarding the following treatments:

- For pain or discomfort - take paracetamol or ibuprofen.
- For itching or swelling - antihistamines and a steroid cream may help.
- **Ask your pharmacist which treatment to buy for a child, some treatments are not suitable for younger children.**
- **Ask your pharmacist which treatment to buy if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.**

### To prevent bites and stings

#### You could try

- ✓ Covering exposed skin when outside or wear insect repellent.
- ✓ Wearing shoes when outdoors.
- ✓ Keeping food and drink covered when outside, particularly sweet things.
- ✓ Keeping doors and windows closed or put thin netting/door beads over them to prevent insects getting in the house.



## Try not to

- ✗ Use products with strong perfumes such as soaps, shampoos and deodorants.
- ✗ Disturb insect nests - If you locate one get a professional in to remove it.
- ✗ Camp near water, such as ponds and lakes.



### See your Community Pharmacy, GP or call 111 if:

You've been bitten or stung by an insect and:

- your symptoms get worse or are not getting any better.
- you were stung in your mouth or throat, or near your eyes.
- you have tummy pain and are being sick.
- you feel dizzy or lightheaded.
- a large area around the bite or sting becomes red and swollen.
- you have a high temperature and swollen glands.
- you were stung more than once.
- you've had a serious allergic reaction to an insect bite or sting before.

### Call 999 if:

- you're wheezing.
- you get tightness in the chest or throat or are struggling to swallow.
- you have trouble breathing or talking.
- your mouth, face, lips, tongue or throat start swelling.
- your skin, tongue or lips turn blue, grey or pale (if you have black or brown skin, this may be easier to see on the palms of your hands or soles of your feet).
- you suddenly become very confused, drowsy or dizzy.
- someone faints and cannot be woken up.
- a child is limp, floppy or not responding like they normally do (their head may fall to the side, backwards or forwards, or they may find it difficult to lift their head or focus on your face).

### Here are some useful links to further information

<b>NHS Website</b>	<a href="https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/insect-bites-and-stings/">https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/insect-bites-and-stings/</a>
<b>Patient Websites</b>	<a href="https://patient.info/skin-conditions/insect-bites-and-stings-leaflet">https://patient.info/skin-conditions/insect-bites-and-stings-leaflet</a>
<b>Or visit your local pharmacy for advice</b>	

