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Bee Stings Hurt!

When a bee or wasp stings, it injects a venomous fluid under the skin. Only the honey bee leaves her stinger in the skin of its victim. Instant removal of the stinger usually reduces harmful effects.



Wasps, yellowjackets, and hornets have a lance-like stinger without barbs and can sting repeatedly. The wasp venom contains a chemical "alarm pheromone," released into the air, signaling guard wasps to come and sting whomever and whatever gets in their way.

How to recover

First, return to a safe place. Immediately apply ice or cold compresses to the sting site. To reduce the itching, irritation, redness and swelling, the following may be used:

- Ice
- Baking Soda

Oral Antihistamines--Tablets may be chewed for faster relief, but liquids are more readily absorbed after oral ingestion (Chlortrimeton, Dimetane, Teldrin).
Epinephrine Inhaler (Bronkaid mist, Primatene, Medihaler-Epi)
Topical Steroids (Cortaid, Dermolate, Lanacort, etc.)

Preventing Stings

Since perfume, hair spray, hair tonic, suntan lotion, aftershave lotions, heavy-scented shampoos, soaps and many other cosmetics attract insects, they should be avoided.



Avoid shiny buckles and jewelry. Wear a hat and closed shoes (not sandals). Don't wear bright, colored, loose-fitting clothing, which may attract and trap insects. Flowery prints and black especially attract insects.



Keep lawns free of clover and dandelions, which attract honey bees.

When eating outdoors, keep food covered until eaten, especially ripe fruit and soft drinks. Any scent of food, such as outdoor cooking, eating, feeding pets or garbage cans, will attract many bees and wasps (especially yellow jackets).

Keep refuse in tightly sealed containers. Be careful not to mow over a nest in the ground nor disturb a nest in a tree or eaves of the home. Any disturbance often will infuriate and provoke stinging.