

Everyone Goes Home “SAFE”!

Insect Bites or Stings

Most insect bites are trivial, and can be easily treated; however, some cause local reactions, at the site of the bite, or systemic affecting basic body functions. Local reactions may be uncomfortable but do not pose a serious hazard. Systemic reactions, although rare, may be serious. This is a life-threatening allergic reaction known as anaphylaxis, and it requires urgent emergency care.



Thousands of people are stung by insects each year, and as many as 90–100 people in the United States die as a result of allergic reactions. This number may be underreported as deaths may be mistakenly diagnosed as heart attacks or sunstrokes or may be attributed to other causes. These severe reactions can be rapidly fatal if untreated. Call 911 if you are with someone who has trouble breathing or goes into shock.

Fire ants, bees, wasps, yellow jackets and hornets are common. These insects inject venom, a poisonous substance to humans, through their stingers.

Fire Ants



Imported fire ants first came to the United States around 1930. Now there are five times more ants per acre in the United States than in their native South America. The fire ants that came to the United States escaped their natural enemies and thrived in the southern landscape.

Fire ants bite and sting. They are aggressive when stinging and inject venom, which causes a burning sensation. Red bumps form at the sting, and within a day or two they become white fluid-filled pustules.

Preventing Fire Ant Stings and Bites

- Do not disturb or stand on or near ant mounds.
- Be careful when lifting items (including animal carcasses) off the ground, as they may be covered in ants.
- Fire ants may also be found on trees or in water, so always look over the area before starting to work.

First Aid: Workers with a history of severe allergic reactions to insect bites or stings should consider carrying an epinephrine auto injector (EpiPen) and should wear a medical identification bracelet or necklace stating their allergy.

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Workers should take the following steps if they are stung or bitten by fire ants:

- Rub off ants briskly, as they will attach to the skin with their jaws.
- Antihistamines may help.
 - Follow directions on packaging.
 - Drowsiness may occur.
- Take the worker to an emergency medical facility immediately if a sting causes severe chest pain, nausea, severe sweating, loss of breath, serious swelling, or slurred speech.

Black Widows



Brown Recluse Spiders

The brown recluse spider cannot bite humans without some form of counter pressure, for example, through unintentional contact that traps the spider against the skin. Bites may cause a stinging sensation with localized pain. A small white blister usually develops at the site of the bite. The venom of a brown recluse can cause a severe lesion by destroying skin tissue (skin necrosis). This skin lesion will require professional medical attention.

Protect Yourself

1. Observe your surroundings. Look for anthills, spider webs and bee/wasp nests in the area where you are working.
2. Do not just reach into an area if you cannot see inside. A wasp nest or spider web may be inside.
3. Be careful when putting on gloves and boots that have been unattended. Shake them out before inserting hands or feet.
4. If you see bee/wasp nest, do not disturb the nest. Notify Safety.
5. Insect repellent is available on-site.

Black widow spiders are found throughout North America, but are most common in the southern and western areas of the United States. They are identified by the pattern of red hour glass coloration on the underside of their abdomen. They are usually found in workplaces containing undisturbed areas such as woodpiles, under eaves, fences, and other areas where debris has