



# MAFES Dawg Tracks

February 13, 2012



*Insect & Bee  
Sting Safety*



Bees, along with other stinging and biting insects, are pesky jokers. They are worrisome to some. And for some folks, they can be extremely dangerous. "Experts" say that most bees and insects won't attack if they are left alone. I say that they are like snakes - as the snake experts say they won't bother you if you leave them alone. The two have one thing in common - leaving them alone may be true, but the shock of seeing them can make you hurt yourself by trying to avoid them.

Bites or stings from either will cause instant skin reactions. Stings from fire ants, wasps, bees, or hornets are usually painful. The bites from mosquitoes, fleas, and mites normally cause more itching than pain. Spider bites from the Black Widow or Brown Recluse are serious and can be life-threatening. Most spider bites are harmless. If you are bitten by an insect or spider, try to bring it in for identification (if you can do it quickly and safely.)

## **SYMPTOMS OF STINGS OR BITES-**

- ✓ Symptoms vary according to the type of insect and individual.
- ✓ Normal characteristics are pain, redness, swelling, or itching.
- ✓ Other symptoms include burning feelings, numbness, or tingling.

## **REDUCING THE RISK OF BEING STUNG-**

- Wear light-colored, smooth-finished clothing.
- Avoid perfumed soaps, shampoos and deodorants. Don't wear perfumes or colognes. Avoid bananas and banana scented toiletries.
- Wear clean clothing and bathe daily. Sweat angers bees.
- Cover the body with clothing as much as possible.
- Avoid flowering plants.
- Check for nests during the summer months of July, August, and September and in the warmer hours of the day. These are the times that bees are more active.
- Keep areas clean. Social wasps thrive in places where humans discard food. It behooves us to clean up around grills and any outdoor eating areas.
- If a single stinging insect is flying around you, be still; lay down with your face down until it flies off. Flaying away at it may cause it to sting.
- If you are attacked by several bees or other stinging insects, try to run away from them. Bees release a chemical when they sting that attracts others to the intruder. Try, if possible, to get inside a building where they are less likely to be.
- If a bee or other stinging insect gets in your car, pull off to the side of the road, stop and unroll all the windows to allow the joker to leave.

## **FIRST AID-**

### **Emergencies:**

- Check the victim's airways and breathing. If necessary, call 911 and start CPR and rescue breathing.
- Reassure the victim. Keep them calm.
- Remove rings or any other restricting items - because the affected area might swell.
- Use the victim's EpiPen or emergency kit, if they have one. (Some folks with serious bite problems have them).
- If appropriate, treat the person for signs of shock. Stay with the victim until help arrives.

### **General steps:**

- Remove the stinger. If it is still present, take the back of a credit card or other straight edge and scrape it across the area of the bite. If this doesn't work, use any straight edged object. Do not use tweezers - as they may squeeze the venom sac and increase the amount of venom released.
- Wash the site thoroughly with soap and water.
- Place ice (wrap in a wash cloth) on the site of the sting for 10 minutes and off for 10 minutes. Repeat the process.
- If the situation deems the necessity, take an antihistamine or apply creams to reduce the itching.
- Check the sting area for a few days to see that there are no signs of infection (increasing redness, swelling, or pain).
- Do not apply a tourniquet or give the victim stimulants such as aspirin or other pain medication unless it is prescribed by a doctor.

## **TIME TO CALL A MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL-**

Call 911 if the victim:

- Has trouble breathing, wheezing, or has shortness of breath
- Swelling anywhere on the face or mouth
- Tightness in the throat or difficulty swallowing
- Feeling weak or turning blue

Allergic reactions can be deadly. People who are allergic to insect stings should carry a sting kit with them and wear an ID medical bracelet or necklace stating their allergy. Your family physician can help you secure one or the other of these.

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*Excerpts:www.masdonline.org-(um. Ext.)*

[www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus)

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