

How to Avoid Stings and Bites

Written by Dr. Niru Prasad

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During spring and summer, children and adults get more involved with outdoor activities and there is a good chance of being stung by bees, wasps, hornets or yellow jackets. Reactions to such stings can range from mild to a severe life threatening condition.

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How to avoid stings:

1. Wear smooth textured clothing in subdued colors. Bright color attract agitated bees.
2. Don't go barefoot.
3. Keep collars and sleeves buttoned or closed.
4. Bees are more likely to sting in gloomy weather than on bright sunny days, so take precaution to avoid them.
5. Never strike, agitate or throw an object at a bee or wasp hive.
6. Smoke has a calming effect on bees, so beekeepers often use a smoke canister to control their activity.
7. If caught in a swarm of bees or wasps, move away with slow deliberate movement.

What to do if you are stung:

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1. Apply ice or a cold compress to the sting for relief of pain and swelling.
2. If stung, gently remove the stinger with tweezers.
3. Get medical help as soon as possible if you feel dizzy, faint, short of breath or break out in hives.
4. The doctor can prescribe a bee sting kit which includes Epinephrine, syringe and Benadryl to cut down allergy in blood.

What to do to relieve itching from bug bites:

1. Ice acts as a local anesthetic to relieve itching, swelling and pain from bug bites.
2. Menthol, phenol or camphor are ingredients of itch relieving lotions that might help upon local application.
3. Oral antihistamines act as mild sedatives and relieve itching.
4. If reactions to bites worsen, seek medical help immediately.
5. Use insect repellent with 10% DEET on children older than two years of age.

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Precautions against Lyme Disease:

Lyme Disease is a debilitating bacterial illness that is spread by the bite of a tick.

How to protect yourself:

1. During tick season, stay out of woods and fields likely to be infested.
2. Wear light colored protective clothing, long sleeves tucked at wrist, shirts tucked at waist and pants tucked into socks.
3. Treat clothing with repellent which kills ticks on contact.
4. Inspect children when they come indoors. Do a thorough self-inspection when you come indoors. The transmission of the disease is unlikely if the tick has been attached for less than 48 hours.
5. Make sure pets are well protected with tick collars and powders and check them daily during tick season.

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Guidelines for

Sports Injury

Prevention

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Guidelines for Sports Injury Prevention:

1. Recognize the need for regular physical activities. Regular exercise - 20 minutes per day at least 3 days per week.
2. Start slowly - gradual increase in stages. Rest to allow rebuilding of cells.
3. Know the physical requirements of the sports. At least 2-4 weeks of preseason activity for the particular sport. Continue the strengthening exercises at least one time per week. Attention to the maintenance program will help prevent the occurrence of overuse injury later in the season.
4. Proper equipment - such as comfortable athletic shoes for runners.
5. Dress appropriately - light, loose, layered clothing. Faceguard, helmet, shoulder pads, wrist pads, knee pads and socks.
6. Proper warm-up and cool-down. Gradual activity to raise body temperature to sweating followed by static stretching. Proper cool down - decrease activity slowly.

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7. Don't overexert yourself. Know your limitations.

8. Don't underestimate an injury. Respect pain as an indicator that something is not right.

Protection against Poisonous Plants

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Protection against poisonous plants such as Poison Ivy, Poison Sumac, mushrooms and wild berries.

The stems and leaves of these plants contains a sticky oily substance containing Urushiol, an oil that causes allergic reactions in the body.

Precaution tips against exposure:

1. Dress your child appropriately. Preferably long sleeve shirt and pants while going out in the woods.
2. Wash the exposed area of skin after contact with Poison Ivy plants with soap and water.

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Also wash clothing, gardening tools, etc.

3. Apply Calamine lotion initially to stop itching if rash develops.
4. Avoid preparation with Benzocaine since they cause severe allergic reaction.
5. Use oral antihistamine, corn starch bath or oatmeal bath to affected area 2-3 times per day.
6. If blisters develop and child has discomfort, please contact your pediatrician.

Teach your children not to eat any plants, mushrooms, etc. from your backyard. Berries are attractive to children and the berries of Holly Taxis and Mistletoe plants are toxic.

Other harmful plants include Flowering Foxglove, Oleander plants, the bells of Lilly of the Valley and Daffodils. The Pokeweed and its berries and Nightshade that grow in shrubs are poisonous. Some of the wild mushrooms, if eaten by children, can cause a severe allergic reaction as well as vomiting and diarrhea.

How to avoid Diving, Swimming and Boating Accidents

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How to avoid diving, swimming and boating accidents:

1. Supervise young children and toddlers when they are in swimming pools or lakes.
2. Teach your children swimming.
3. For those of us who have backyard swimming pools, have proper fence with gates and a cordless telephone available by the swimming pool for emergencies.
4. The parents and caretakers should take basic life support certifications.
5. Before entering the swimming pool, be sure that pool is deep enough to protect against diving accidents.
6. Do not keep beer, wine or any alcohol by the swimming pool.
7. Always wear life preservers when boating and the children should wear floats while in swimming pools.
8. Never swim alone.

How to avoid Sunburn

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During summer months, prolonged exposure to sunshine can give you severe sunburn which is a very painful condition that can be avoided by taking precautions.

Precautions to avoid sunburn:

1. Wear a hat and protective clothing and apply an adequate amount of sunscreen lotion 30-60 minutes before going outside. Sunscreen lotions are rated according to their sun protecting factor. The higher the SPF, the greater the protection. The sun protecting factor you need depends upon several factors including your environment, activity and skin type.
2. Use an opaque sunscreen lotion on exposed parts of the body such as the bridge of the nose, top of the ears, cheeks, neck, shoulder and lips to minimize skin damage.
3. Use a waterproof sunscreen (PABA Estev) for swimming or strenuous activity and re-apply periodically to compensate for protection washed off by water or perspiration.
4. If you are going to be near a reflective surface such as snow, sand or cement, use a sunscreen lotion with a high SPF. Reflection can intensify the amount of ultraviolet exposure by 50 percent.

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5. Avoid sun exposure if you are taking certain medications that increase the sensitivity to the sun's effect such as anti-depressants, anti-histamines, Tetracycline, oral contraceptives and certain non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medication, antifungal and griseofulvin.

The sunburn precaution tips for infants and small children:

Infants and children's skin are more sensitive to sunburn since they contain less pigments and a child's unprotected skin can burn in less than 10 minutes on a bright sunny day.

Safety Precaution tips for infants and children:

1. Do not use sunscreen lotion on babies less than six months of age because the chemicals in lotion can cause an allergic reaction. For baby's protection, use a hat, stroller canopy, umbrella, shady trees and light weight clothing.

2. Children older than six months of age should use sunscreen lotion with a sun protecting factor of 15 or higher. For swimming protection, use waterproof or water resistant products since they block out most ultraviolet A and ultraviolet B rays.

3. Apply sunscreen lotion to exposed areas of a child's body 30 minutes before going outdoors.

4. Child's nose, cheeks and earlobes tend to burn faster, hence cover them with a sunblock such as Zinc Oxide which blocks out UV radiation.

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5. Limit child's outdoor activities if possible during 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. since the sun's rays are most strong.

6. If a child gets sunburn:

a: Apply a cool water compress, give plenty of fluids and Tylenol or Motrin for discomfort.

b: If the child experiences severe pain, blisters, faintness and dizzy spells due to dehydration, consult your pediatrician immediately.

1. Avoid tanning machines which may increase your risk of skin cancer. Wear eye protection.

2. If you decide to be in the sun for longer periods, start with brief periods of exposure and increase them gradually. As the skin tans, it thickens, decreasing absorption of harmful rays into deeper layers of the skin.

Oral analgesics, cool compresses applied to the skin and cool baths help relieve pain and fever of sunburn.

Sunburn with extensive blistering or general symptoms of nausea, vomiting, weakness or chills are more serious and needs to be evaluated by a physician. These are symptoms of second degree burn.