

## **Bugs: Avoid the zings of bites and stings**

They buzz, creep and hover. And sometimes bugs bite or sting.

Most people aren't bothered too much by bug bites. But others can have bad reactions and need to get help fast.

Bugs can also carry disease, such as Lyme disease and West Nile virus.

You can't prevent all insect bites, but to help keep bugs from bugging or harming you:

- Use insect repellent with DEET to stop bites from mosquitoes, ticks, fleas, chiggers and biting flies. Repellents for children should have only 10 percent DEET. Don't use repellents on babies.
- Don't use scented soaps or perfumes, which attract bugs.
- Stay indoors at dawn and at dusk, when there are more bugs around.
- Stay away from bug hangouts, such as puddles of water, garbage cans and flower gardens.
- Make sure garbage cans are covered.
- Keep food and drinks covered if you have them outdoors.
- Wear long pants, long-sleeved shirts and shoes – not sandals – in grassy or wooded areas. Check your clothes and skin for ticks.
- If you are allergic to stings, wear a bracelet that says so.

## **When to act fast**

If you have a bad reaction to a sting, call 911 right away.

If you have special medicine to give yourself a shot, inject it. This will help keep the reaction from getting worse.

Signs of an emergency may include:

- Itching and hives over large parts of the body
- Swelling of the throat or tongue
- Trouble breathing
- Feeling dizzy
- Feeling sick to your stomach, cramps or diarrhea
- Fainting. If someone has passed out, lay the person on his or her back while you wait for help to come. Raise the person's legs by resting them on a pillow.
- Children may cough, choke, drool, sound hoarse or have trouble talking.

An allergy may not happen after your first sting. It can happen after a few stings, even over a long time. So watch your kids and yourself for signs of a reaction after someone gets stung.

Sources: American College of Emergency Physicians; American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology