

## SPIDER CONTROL

Sanitation is the first step in spider control. Regular vacuuming, cleaning closets and storage spaces, reducing clutter, and shaking out shoes and clothing before wearing help to reduce the chances of a bite. Prevent spiders from coming inside by caulking cracks and crevices on the outside of the house.

### First Aid For Spider Bites:

- Call the poison center immediately.
- Wash the bite with soap and cool water.
- Apply topical antibiotic to avoid risk of infection.



## POISONOUS SNAKES

There are 5 species of poisonous snakes in Missouri. It is important to know the difference between poisonous and non-poisonous snakes, especially if you spend a lot of time outdoors.

- All of the poisonous snakes are pit vipers, which means they have an opening on each side of the head called a sensory pit.
- Poisonous snakes have fangs; non-poisonous snakes have small rows of teeth.
- Venomous snakes have a single row of scales on the underside of the tail; non-poisonous snakes have two rows.

### Tips to avoid snakebites:

- Stay away from areas that are known to have a high concentration of snakes: woodpiles, tall, grassy areas, and bluffs.
- Wear protective footwear in areas where there are likely to be snakes.
- Be cautious while hiking, especially around large rocks or logs. Consider using a walking stick when hiking.
- Do not place your hands under rocks or logs; tap the top of logs before stepping over them.
- Wear rubber boots when fishing in streams that may harbor the venomous cottonmouth.
- Avoid trying to pick up or touch any snake.



COTTONMOUTH

Photo courtesy of Missouri Department of Conservation

## FIRST AID FOR POISONOUS SNAKE BITES:

1. Call the poison center immediately.
2. Evaluate the patient and try to determine if the bite is that of a poisonous snake - look for one or two distinct fang marks.
3. Remove all constricting clothing or jewelry, which may delay or hide swelling.
4. Wash the bite area with soap and water to minimize risk of infection.
5. DO NOT apply ice.
6. DO NOT cut over the fang marks and try to suck out the venom as this may increase tissue injury, does not remove an appreciable amount of venom and may cause more serious problems.
7. DO NOT put a tourniquet around the affected limb; this may increase local tissue damage.
8. Transport the patient to the nearest health care facility as soon as possible.



If someone has been stung or bitten, call the poison center.  
Do not wait for symptoms to occur.  
1-800-222-1222



SSM Cardinal Glennon Children's Hospital



Missouri Regional Poison Center

St. Louis  
314-772-5200

Outside St. Louis Toll Free  
1-800-366-8888 or 1-800-222-1222

Missouri Regional Poison Center

# STINGING INSECTS, SPIDERS, AND SNAKES



SSM Cardinal Glennon  
Children's Hospital

**1-800-222-1222**

Fortunately, the stings and bites that most insects inflict are more often a nuisance than a serious problem. But some stings can result in serious, even fatal, allergic reactions in sensitized individuals. It is important to know the difference between various types of reactions to stings. A local reaction to a sting is not considered an emergency, but systemic reactions may require immediate medical intervention.

Stinging insects are generally not aggressive and will usually sting only in self-defense. Bees are able to sting only once because they have a barbed stinger, which is usually left in the skin. It may appear like a small splinter sticking out of the sting site. Wasps, hornets and yellow jackets do not lose their stinger and may induce multiple stings.

## LOCAL ALLERGIC REACTIONS

Most people experience a local allergic reaction to the sting of a wasp, bee, hornet, or yellow jacket. Symptoms may include local swelling at the sting site, redness, warmth, pain or itching. The severity of the symptoms may vary depending on a person's sensitivity to the sting. Rarely, effects may involve an entire limb. While these reactions feel very unpleasant, they are not life threatening.

### To treat a local reaction to a sting:

- Remove the stinger (if present) by gently scraping across the sting with a broad flat object like a credit card or stiff cardboard. **DO NOT PINCH THE STINGER OR USE TWEEZERS**, as this can squeeze more venom into the skin.
- Wash the area with soap and water to prevent infection.
- Apply an ice pack or cold compress to the sting site – 15 minutes on then 15 minutes off for as long as needed to reduce swelling and pain.
- Avoid scratching as this may cause infection. Apply hydrocortisone cream per package directions to the site of the sting to help decrease redness, swelling, and itching until the symptoms subside.
- Apply a topical antibiotic ointment or cream to help prevent infection.

### Call 911 if a person is stung in the mouth or throat, even if there is just a local reaction.

Swelling tissues can quickly block a person's airway.

Call the poison center immediately if a person is stung multiple times; they may be at risk for more serious symptoms than those mentioned above.

## SYSTEMIC ALLERGIC REACTIONS

Some people are highly sensitive to the venom produced by bees, wasps, hornets, and yellow jackets.

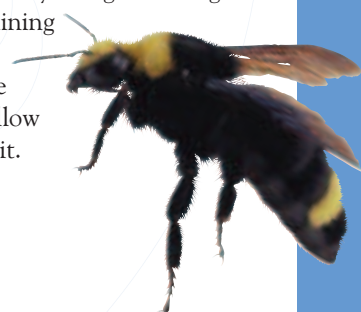
In addition to a local reaction, a person may exhibit the following symptoms:

- Large area of swelling
- Difficulty breathing
- Tightness in throat or chest
- Dry, hacking cough
- Hives
- Swollen or itchy eyes
- Swelling of lips or throat
- Rapid pulse
- Drop in blood pressure
- Pale or flushed skin
- Nausea, vomiting, or stomach cramps



### Treatment of systemic allergic reactions:

- **CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY** or call for emergency medical service.
- While waiting for emergency transport, have the person lie down.
- If the person is unconscious and breathing, lay the person on his or her side to allow drainage from the mouth.
- Most people who are severely allergic to stings carry an allergy kit containing epinephrine. Check the person to see if they have such a kit with them. Follow the instructions on the kit.



## PREVENTION IS A BETTER SOLUTION THAN TREATMENT REGARDING STINGING INSECTS.

### When outdoors and around stinging insects:

- Wear light colored clothing.
- Avoid wearing perfumes and scented oils and lotions.
- **DO NOT** walk around bare footed or leave unprotected skin exposed.
- Wear insect repellent.
- Keep an Epi-Pen® on hand, only if you're known to have severe reactions, and know how to use it.
- Pour sodas and other drinks into cups. Most stings in the mouth come from a wasp or bee that crawled inside a can of soda. Pouring the drink into a cup will allow you to see the intruder. Don't leave food containers open.
- Wear a hat and gloves while working among flowers and fruit trees.



**1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day  
7 days a week**

## POISONOUS SPIDERS

Spiders will not attack and bite humans unless they are cornered, accidentally pinned against the skin, injured, or provoked. Despite the common belief that bites from poisonous spiders are often fatal, deaths from spider bites are extremely rare in humans. There are two species of poisonous spiders in Missouri: the black widow and the brown recluse. Call the poison center if you think one of these has bitten you.

### Black Widow

The female black widow is jet black with a red hourglass shaped marking on the underside of the abdomen. Black widows live in undisturbed locations such as woodpiles; dark corners of barns, garages, and houses; and under boards and rocks. They also like to make their homes in crawlspaces, cellars, basements, and outhouses.



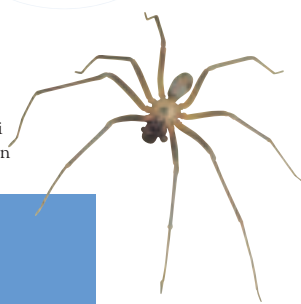
**BLACK WIDOW**  
Photo courtesy of Missouri Department of Conservation

The venom of the black widow affects the nervous system. At first, the bite may go unnoticed or feel like a sharp pinprick. This pain goes away in a few minutes; however, it is replaced by a dull, aching, or numbing sensation 20-40 minutes later. One or two puncture wounds may be seen at the site of the bite, which may be reddened and warm to the touch.

### Brown Recluse

The color of this spider varies from light tan to dark brown. It has a fiddle shaped mark on its back. You can find these spiders outdoors under overhanging rocks and cliffs, but they also live in dry, undisturbed places. Brown recluse spiders like to make their homes in undisturbed areas like trash and piles of laundry.

After a brown recluse bite, a person may feel pain, itching, or tingling at the site. Several hours later the surrounding area becomes swollen and tender. In some cases, the tissue around the site of the bite swells and becomes hard to the touch. This tissue may slough off, leaving a sunken, ulcer like sore. On rare occasions, the toxin can affect the entire body, leading to abnormalities in the blood and even shock and kidney failure. Symptoms include fever, chills, nausea, vomiting, and darkened urine (the color of cola).



**BROWN RECLUSE**  
Photo courtesy of Missouri Department of Conservation