



Department of
Health



First aid for bites and stings

Serious allergic reactions occur in approximately 2 per cent of stings from ants, bees and wasps. Symptoms such as swelling of the face, lips and tongue, breathing difficulties or a generalised rash are potentially life-threatening and require urgent medical attention.

Spiders

Red-back spider (*Lactrodectus*)



Red-back spider

Wash the bite site, apply antiseptic and a cool pack. In the majority of cases only minor pain and redness occur. In 25 per cent of cases, severe pain and other symptoms such as sweating, headache, vomiting and muscle pain develop over the first few hours. Take the victim to hospital if there are severe symptoms.

White-tailed spider (*Lampona*)

There is no clear scientific evidence that bites from these spiders cause skin ulceration. Treat as for bites from all other spiders.

Spiders – all other

Wash the bite site, apply antiseptic and see your doctor if signs of local infection develop.
(This information only applies to the regions of South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory.)

Bandaging a bitten leg

- Apply a broad pressure bandage from below upwards and over the bite site as soon as possible. Do not remove trousers, as the movement of doing so will assist venom to enter blood stream.



- The bandage should be as tight as you would apply to a sprained ankle. The patient should avoid any unnecessary movements.



- Extend the bandage as high as possible.



- Apply a splint to the leg, immobilising joints either side of the bite.



- Bind it firmly to as much of the leg as possible.



This bandaging technique should also be used for blue-ringed octopus bites.

Where to get help

For a snake bite, or if the victim has collapsed or has stopped breathing, do not delay, phone 000 for an ambulance.

Call the Poisons Information Centre on 13 11 26 (24 hours a day).

Acknowledgements

WA Poisons Information Centre

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