

Bites and stings

Bites and stings from animals, spiders and insects in Australia are commonplace, but fatal bites are uncommon. In fact, only 1 in 20 bites from the funnel-web spider causes a serious problem. The following information is a summary of first aid treatment for some bites and stings.

Snake bites

First aid

1. Keep the patient quite still.
2. Do not wash or cut the wound.
3. Immediately bandage the bite site very firmly, but not too tightly. A crepe bandage is ideal; it should extend above the bite for about 15 cm.
4. Place the limb that has been bitten in a splint: use a firm stick or slab of wood.
5. Get the patient to the nearest doctor or major hospital without delay. If possible, take the dead snake along too.

Tick bites

Ticks may lodge anywhere in the body of humans and their bite can be fatal, especially in children.

First aid

Do not attempt to pull the tick out by grasping the body. Take the patient to someone who is expert at removing them. If this is not possible, loop a strong thread around the tick's head close to the skin and pull it sharply sideways.

Blue-ringed octopus stings

Children playing in small rock pools around sea shores are most likely to be stung.

First aid

Seek medical attention immediately. Mouth-to-mouth resuscitation may be necessary.

Spider bites

The Sydney funnel-web and the red-back spiders are the most dangerous. Unlike bites from snakes, spider bites are painful.

First aid

The first aid for the Sydney funnel-web is exactly the same as for snake bites. For red-back spider bites, apply an icepack but do not bandage. Then seek medical help.

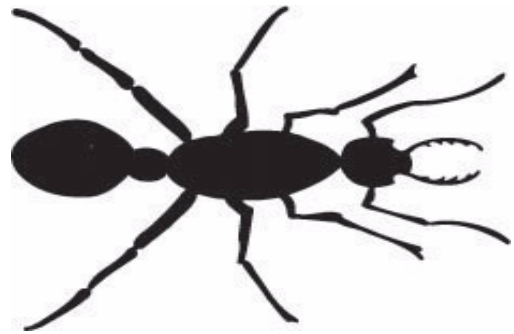
Bee stings

First aid

1. Scrape the sting off sideways with a fingernail or knife blade. Do not squeeze it with the fingertips.
2. Apply ice to the sting site.
3. Rest and elevate the limb that has been stung.

Other bites and stings

These include bites from ants, wasps, bluebottles, scorpions and centipedes.



First aid

1. Wash the site with large quantities of cool water.
2. Apply vinegar or Stingose to the wound for about 30 seconds.
3. Apply ice for several minutes.
4. A soothing anti-itch cream then can be used.
5. Medicine is not usually necessary.
6. Seek medical aid if any unusual problems develop.

Note

The box jellyfish (sea wasp) in tropical waters is very dangerous. Liberal amounts of vinegar should be applied as soon as possible.