

Bee or Yellow Jacket Stings

Brief Version

What is a sting?

Bees, wasps, hornets, and yellow jackets can all sting. Most stings are caused by yellow jackets. Stings cause painful red bumps right away. Most of the time, the pain is better in a couple of hours. The sting could keep swelling for 24 hours. If your child was stung many times, your child may vomit or have diarrhea, a headache, and a fever. This is because of the large amount of venom from the stings.

Stings can also cause an allergic reaction. If your child is allergic, your child may find it hard to breathe or swallow. Your child could pass out or get hives. You should call 911 or your doctor right away if this happens.

How can I help my child?

- Look for the stinger. If there is a little black dot in the area of the sting, the stinger is still in the skin. Just scrape the stinger off. If only a small piece is still there, it will come out on its own.
- Rub each sting for 20 minutes with a cotton ball soaked in meat tenderizer and water. (Stay away from the area around the eye.) This can help the pain. Or you can use deodorant (with aluminum in it) or baking soda and water for 20 minutes.
- If it still hurts, rub it with an ice cube for 10 minutes.
- Give acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil) right away. That will help the pain and burning.
- If it itches, put on hydrocortisone cream.

How can I help prevent bee stings?

- Make sure your child wears shoes when going outside to play.
- Have your child stay out of orchards and away from gardens.

Call 911 or your child's doctor right away if:

- Your child finds it hard to breathe or swallow.

Call your child's doctor during office hours if:

- The swelling keeps getting worse after 24 hours.
- If the swelling of the hand or foot spreads past the wrist or ankle.
- You have other questions or concerns.

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This content is reviewed periodically and is subject to change as new health information becomes available. The information is intended to inform and educate and is not a replacement for medical evaluation, advice, diagnosis or treatment by a healthcare professional.