

## **J. BITES AND STINGS**

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In this chapter you will learn about:

- Animal bites.
- Snake bites.
- Insect stings and bites.

## **J.1      ANIMAL BITES (DOG, CAT, MONKEY, MONGOOSE, HORSE, COW OR OTHER ANIMAL BITES)**

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Any bite of an animal (or human) that breaks the skin needs special attention because it carries a high risk of infection!

Many animals including dog, cat, monkey, fox, bat, cow, horse or jackals may carry germ of rabies. Rabies is a viral infection that targets the brain and nervous system. A person can catch rabies when bitten or scratched by an infected animal. If not treated urgently, the disease is lethal. All victims of dog (cat, monkey, jackals etc.) bites or scratches need to be referred immediately for further treatment and follow up.

### **J.1.1      WHAT DO I SEE AND ENQUIRE?**

You might see the following on a person that has been bitten:

- Bite marks.
- Puncture wounds (if skin is broken).
- Scraped skin.
- Moderate or severe bleeding.
- Local swelling.
- Redness.
- Pain.

### **J.1.2      WHAT DO I DO?**

#### **J.1.2.1      SAFETY FIRST AND HYGIENE**



1. Make sure the area is safe and the animal cannot bite you or the injured person again.
  2. Wash your hands before and after taking care of the patient. Use soap and water to wash your hands. If no soap is available, you can use ash to wash your hands. Alcohol-based sanitizers can also be used, if available.
  3. Put on gloves if available. If not, you can also use a clean plastic bag.
- Try not to come in contact with the injured person's blood or wound.

### J.1.2.2 PROVIDE FIRST AID



4. Flush the wound immediately with lots of clean water and then wash the wound with soap and water or a detergent for 10-15 minutes, if available to remove the rabies virus from the wound. Wash with povidone-iodine (*Alopim, Betadine, Clopo, Wokadine, a.o.*) if available. Washing is also necessary when a person is licked, scratched or has abrasion.



5. If the person is severely bleeding, stop the bleeding by applying pressure to the wound.
6. Do not cut the wound larger.
7. Do not put herbs or unclean materials like chillies, oil, petrol in or on the wound.



8. Cover the wound with a dry clean cloth or bandage.
9. Refer the person to a healthcare facility immediately for further treatment.

### **J.1.2.3     *HYGIENE***

Wash your hands after taking care of the patient. Use soap and water to wash your hands. If no soap is available, you can use ash to wash your hands. Alcohol-based sanitizers can also be used, if available.

### **J.1.3        *WHEN TO REFER TO A HEALTHCARE FACILITY?***



A person bitten by a dog (or any other animal) should always visit the nearest healthcare facility.

Any person who was licked, scratched or suffered abrasions from an animal should visit the healthcare facility.

## **J.2      SNAKE BITES**

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There are more than 2500 different kinds of snakes. The effects of snake bites vary according to the type of snake. Note that not all snakes are poisonous, not all poisonous ones are lethal, but one should always be careful handling snakes. All snake bites should be treated as if they are poisonous bites. Snakes rarely strike when not disturbed or threatened.

### **J.2.1      WHAT DO I SEE AND ENQUIRE?**

If a person has been bitten by a snake, you might observe:

- bleeding,
- swelling,
- bruising,
- pain,
- numbness,
- weakness,
- confusion,
- affected vision,
- affected speech,
- nausea or vomiting,
- cardiac arrest, or
- difficult breathing.

### **J.2.2      WHAT DO I DO?**

#### **J.2.2.1      SAFETY FIRST**

1. Make sure the area is safe before you assist the person.
2. The injured person urgently needs help. Shout or call for help if you are alone but do not leave the person unattended. Ask a bystander to seek help or to arrange urgent transport to the nearest healthcare facility. Tell him to come back to you to confirm if help has been secured.

#### **J.2.2.2      PROVIDE FIRST AID**

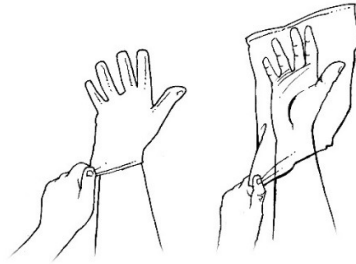


3. Comfort person

4. Help the injured person to lie down and tell him not to move. Offer comfort and keep the person calm, but do not forcibly restrain him. Keeping calm and not moving will slow the spread of the venom.

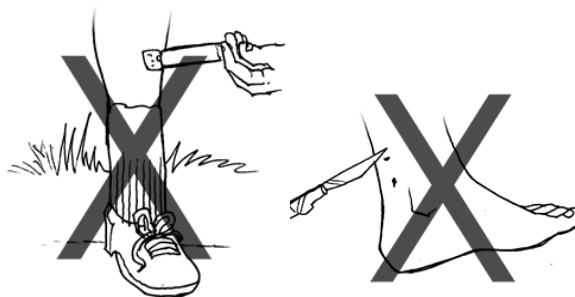
If safe to do so, check what type of snake has bitten the person. If possible, note down the features of the snake. Do not lose time chasing the snake: the person needs urgent help now. It is difficult to assess whether a snake is poisonous or not. Therefore, always assume that the snake is poisonous.

5. Watch the person for any change in his condition (i.e. consciousness and breathing).



6. Put on gloves if they are available. If not available, you can also use a clean plastic bag to cover your hands.

Try not to come in contact with the person's blood.

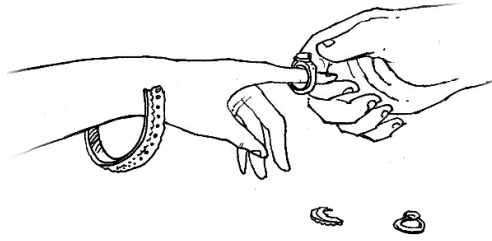


7. Do not suck or cut the venom out of the skin.

Do not rub herbs on the bite.



8. Do not apply a tourniquet.



9. Remove any rings, watches or tight clothing that may cut off the blood flow because of swelling.
10. Try not to move the injured limb and eventually apply a splint to immobilize the affected part.



11. Cover the wound with a clean cotton cloth or bandage.
12. Once action to obtain help has been taken, stay with the injured person until help is available.
13. Observe the condition of the person (i.e. consciousness and breathing).
14. Arrange urgent transport to the nearest healthcare facility or hospital.

#### **J.2.2.2.1 WHAT DO I DO IF THE PERSON IS UNCONSCIOUS, BUT IS STILL BREATHING?**

- a. Put the person in the recovery position.
- b. Continue to observe the victim and check his breathing

#### **J.2.2.2.2 WHAT DO I DO WHEN THE PERSON STOPPED BREATHING?**

Perform CPR.

Do not interrupt the resuscitation until:

- the person starts to wake up, moves, opens his eyes and breathes normally;
- help (trained in CPR) arrives and takes over;
- you become too exhausted to continue; or
- the scene becomes unsafe for you to continue.

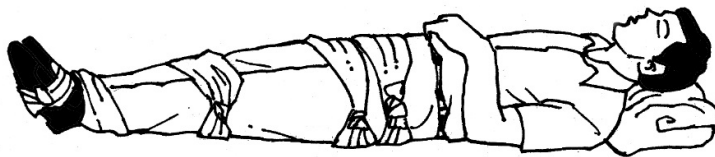
#### **J.2.2.2.3 WHAT DO I DO WHEN VENOM GOT INTO THE EYES?**



1. Clean eye with water
2. Rinse the eyes for 10-15 minutes with clean water.
3. Pour the water from the nose outwards.

#### **J.2.2.2.4 WHAT DO I DO IF THE PERSON IS BITTEN IN THE LEG?**

1. Immobilize the leg by bandaging it to the other leg.



2. Splint leg with snake bite wound

To do so:

- a. Gently bring the good leg to the bitten leg.
- b. Use a stick to splint the limb and bandage it into place with cloths or clothing.

#### **J.2.2.2.5 WHAT DO I DO IF THE PERSON IS BITTEN IN THE ARM OR HAND?**

1. Hold arm still
2. Tell the injured person to immobilize the injured arm himself by holding it close to the body. If it cannot be done due to any reason, immobilize the arm with a triangular bandage.

#### **J.2.2.2.6 WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU ARE BITTEN AND YOU ARE ALONE?**

1. If possible, try to move as little as possible and shout for somebody to come and help you.
2. Remove rings, watches or jewels from the bitten limb.
3. If you need to move to find help, restrict the movement of the limb that has been bitten as much as possible and try to limit brisk movements.
4. Go to the nearest place where somebody can help you.
5. Always seek medical help.



### **J.2.2.3     *HYGIENE***

Wash your hands after taking care of the patient. Use soap and water to wash your hands. If no soap is available, you can use ash to wash your hands. Alcohol-based sanitizers can also be used, if available.

### **J.2.3     WHEN TO REFER TO A HEALTHCARE FACILITY?**



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| Always urgently transport a snake bite victim to the nearest healthcare facility. |
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## **J.3      INSECT STINGS AND BITES**

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Most insect bites and stings cause small reactions that are confined to the area of the bite or sting (local reaction). They can usually be treated at home.

Insect stings inside the throat are dangerous due to potential swelling and can be life-threatening.

Mites, ticks and leeches are found in marshes and jungles. They attach themselves firmly to the skin. Mites and ticks might carry typhus and may transmit it to the person. Ticks may also transmit the lyme disease.

Leeches are mostly harmless, but suck blood from the victim.

The effects of stings from scorpions or bites of spiders vary according to the type of the insect. Note that not all insects are poisonous.

### **J.3.1      WHAT DO I SEE AND ENQUIRE?**

If a person has been stung or bitten by an insect, you might observe:

- pain,
- swelling,
- redness or rash,
- itching,
- some animals stay sucked onto the skin.

Some people experience an allergic reaction to the sting. This reaction can be localised or systemic. A systemic allergic reaction requires immediate medical attention as it is potentially life-threatening.

A person with a systemic allergic reaction may show the following symptoms:

- rash;
- itching;
- wheezing, hoarseness of voice or difficulty in breathing;
- dizziness or feeling faint;
- difficulty in swallowing;
- a swollen face or lips;
- nausea, vomiting or diarrhoea;
- confusion, anxiety or agitation.

The effects of bites or stings from scorpions or spiders vary according to the type of the animal. Note that not all insects are poisonous.

## **J.3.2 WHAT DO I DO?**

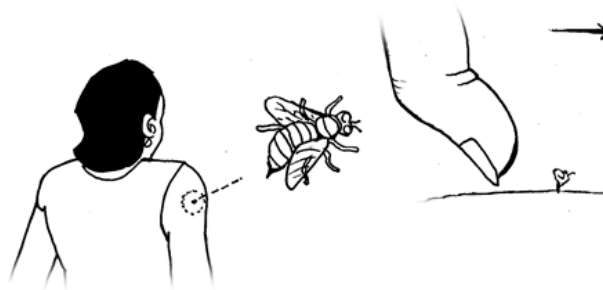
### **J.3.2.1 SAFETY FIRST**

1. Make sure the area is safe before you assist the person.
2. If you are in an area where the wasp or hornet is still around, walk calmly away to a safer area with the victim. If attacked by a swarm, run away as fast as possible and seek shelter (indoors, in a car...).

### **J.3.2.2 PROVIDE FIRST AID**

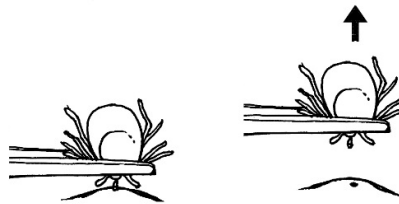
3. Ask the person to keep calm.

#### **J.3.2.2.1 IN CASE OF A BEE OR WASP STING**



Removing the sting of bees (wasps and hornets don't usually leave their sting behind) as quickly as possible can help to keep the bite smaller. Use a finger nail, the edge of a bankcard, or whatever thin sturdy material you have at hand to remove the sting. This can be easily done by pushing upwards from underneath the sting site in a sliding position.

#### **J.3.2.2.2 IN CASE OF A TICK BITE**

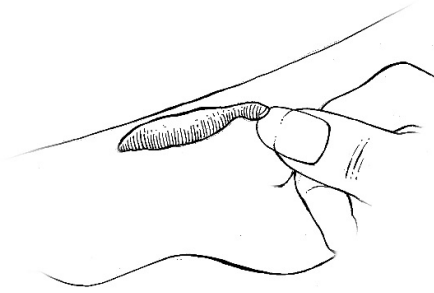


Remove ticks using fine tweezers (not with fingers) and grab the tick as close to the skin as possible. Pull it firmly up until the tick's mouthparts have been removed.

Do not twist or jerk the tick to remove it.

Do not use petroleum jelly, alcohol, a lit match or cigarette, or any other method to try to remove a tick.

#### J.3.2.2.3 IN CASE OF A LEECH BITE



If you find one leech on the person's body, check the entire body as there may be more. Slide a fingernail, the edge of a bankcard or whatever thin sturdy material you have at hand, under the sucker mouth (the smaller head of the leech) of the leech and flick it off right away. Do not squeeze the leech.

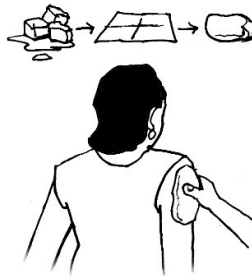
The person may also consider the leech to fill up and fall off by themselves.

Do not put salt on the leech or burn it, as this will make the leech to vomit back into the wound before it falls off. Leech bites tend to bleed for a long time, apply a small bandage and change it regularly.



4. Wash the sting or bite site and wipe away any venom.
5. Do not suck or cut the venom out of the skin.

Do not rub herbs on the bite.



6. Use ice, if you have it, to cool the bite or sting.

Wrap the ice in a cloth or a towel so that it does not touch the skin directly.

If you do not have ice, use cold water.

Do not cool for more than 20 minutes at a time.

7. You may raise the legs of a person suffering an anaphylactic shock.

#### **J.3.2.3      *HYGIENE***

Wash your hands after taking care of the patient. Wash your hands with soap and water. If no soap is available, you can use ash to wash your hands. Alcohol-based sanitizers can also be used, if available.

#### **J.3.2.4      *WHAT DO I DO IF THE PERSON IS UNCONSCIOUS, BUT IS STILL BREATHING?***

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- you become too exhausted to continue; or
- the scene becomes unsafe for you to continue.

#### **J.3.3      *WHEN TO REFER TO A HEALTHCARE FACILITY?***



If the person's condition worsens or the pain does not get better or gets worse, always refer the person to a healthcare facility.