

Overview

Insect bites and stings

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Most insect bites and stings are not serious and will get better in a few hours or days.

Symptoms of insect bites and stings

The main symptoms of an insect bite or sting are:

- pain or [itchiness](#) where you were bitten or stung
- a swollen lump on the skin

Sometimes an insect bite can:

- cause a mild or serious allergic reaction
- get infected
- spread illnesses such as [Lyme disease](#), [scabies](#) and [malaria](#)

[Symptoms of insect bites and stings](#)

What to do if you've been bitten or stung

You can treat most insect bites and stings at home.

They can be treated by:

- [removing the stinger, tick or caterpillar hairs](#) if they're still in or on the skin
- washing the affected area with soap and water

The pain, swelling and itchiness may last a few days. Ask your pharmacist about medicines that can ease your symptoms, such as creams, antihistamines and painkillers.

[Treating insect bites and stings](#)

Preventing insect bites and stings

You can reduce your risk of being bitten or stung by insects.

You may need to take extra precautions if you're travelling abroad. For example, you may be advised to take [malaria tablets](#).

[Preventing insect bites and stings](#)

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