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URL of this page: <https://medlineplus.gov/insectbitesandstings.html>

Insect Bites and Stings

Also called: Bug bites

Most insect bites are harmless, though they sometimes cause discomfort. Bee, wasp, and hornet stings and fire ant bites usually hurt. Mosquito [<https://medlineplus.gov/mosquitobites.html>] and flea bites usually itch. Insects can also spread diseases. In the United States, some mosquitoes spread West Nile virus [<https://medlineplus.gov/westnilevirus.html>]. Travelers outside the United States may be at risk for malaria [<https://medlineplus.gov/malaria.html>] and other infections.

To prevent insect bites and their complications:

- Don't bother insects
- Use insect repellent
- Wear protective clothing
- Be careful when you eat outside because food attracts insects
- If you know you have severe allergic reactions to insect bites and stings (such as anaphylaxis [<https://medlineplus.gov/anaphylaxis.html>]), carry an emergency epinephrine kit

Start Here

- Bug Bites and Stings [<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/insect-bite.html>] (Nemours Foundation)
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/parents/insect-bite.html>]
- Identifying Insect Bites and Stings [<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/from-insects-animals/Pages/Identifying-Insect-Bites-and-Stings.aspx>] (American Academy of Pediatrics)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.healthychildren.org/spanish/safety-prevention/at-play/paginas/identifying-insect-bites-and-stings.aspx>]
- Insects and Scorpions at Work [<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/outdoor-workers/about/insects-and-scorpions.html>] (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

Prevention and Risk Factors

- DEET [<https://www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/deet>] (Environmental Protection Agency)
- Find the Repellent that is Right for You [<https://www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/find-repellent-right-you>] (Environmental Protection Agency)
Also in Spanish [<https://espanol.epa.gov/control-de-plagas/encuentre-el-repelente-de-insectos-adequado>]
- Preventing West Nile [<https://www.cdc.gov/west-nile-virus/prevention/>] (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.cdc.gov/west-nile-virus/es/prevention/como-prevenir-la-enfermedad-por-el-virus-del-nilo-occidental.html>]
- Protect against Mosquito Bites when Traveling
[https://www.cdc.gov/mosquitoes/pdfs/MosquitoBitePreventionTravelers_508.pdf]
(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) - **PDF**
Also in Spanish [https://www.cdc.gov/mosquitoes/pdfs/MosquitoBitePreventionTravelers_ESP_508.pdf]
- Protecting Yourself from Stinging Insects [<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2010-117/pdfs/2010-117.pdf>]
(National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health) - **PDF**

- Repellents: Protection against Mosquitoes, Ticks, and Other Arthropods [<https://www.epa.gov/insect-repellents>] (Environmental Protection Agency)

Treatments and Therapies

- First Aid: Insect Stings and Bites [<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/insect-stings-sheet.html>] (Nemours Foundation)
- Insect Bites and Stings: First Aid [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/first-aid/first-aid-insect-bites/basics/ART-20056593?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/first-aid/first-aid-insect-bites/basics/art-20056593?p=1>]

Related Issues

- Anaphylaxis [<https://familydoctor.org/condition/anaphylaxis/?adfree=true>] (American Academy of Family Physicians)
Also in Spanish [<https://es.familydoctor.org/condicion/anafilaxia-es/?adfree=true>]
- Insect Sting Allergy (Ant, Wasp and Bee Stings) [<https://www.nationaljewish.org/conditions/insect-sting-allergy?modal=1>]  (National Jewish Health)
- Stinging Insect Allergy [<https://www.aaaai.org/tools-for-the-public/conditions-library/allergies/stinging-insect-allergy>] (American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.aaaai.org/tools-for-the-public/biblioteca-de-condiciones/biblioteca-de-alergia/picaduras-de-insectos-consejos-para-tener-en-cuent>]
- Traveler's Health: Avoid Bug Bites [<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/avoid-bug-bites>] (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

Specifics

- Bee Sting [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/bee-stings/symptoms-causes/syc-20353869?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
- Bug Bites and Stings: When to See a Dermatologist [<https://www.aad.org/public/everyday-care/injured-skin/bites/bug-bites-see-dermatologist?NoAds>]  (American Academy of Dermatology)
- Fire Ant Allergy [<https://www.aaaai.org/tools-for-the-public/conditions-library/allergies/fire-ant-allergy>] (American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology)
- Mosquito Bites [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/mosquito-bites/symptoms-causes/syc-20375310?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/mosquito-bites/symptoms-causes/syc-20375310?p=1>]
- Wings and Stings [<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/from-insects-animals/Pages/Wings-and-Stings.aspx>] (American Academy of Pediatrics)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.healthychildren.org/Spanish/health-issues/conditions/from-insects-animals/Paginas/Wings-and-Stings.aspx>]

Images

- Bug Bite or Sting Condition [<https://skinsight.com/skin-conditions/arthropod-bite-or-sting-insect-bites/?lmiw9cApI=1>] (VisualDX)
- Flea Bite [<https://skinsight.com/skin-conditions/flea-bite/?lmiw9cApI=1>] (VisualDX)

Test Your Knowledge

- Stinging Insect Matching Game [<https://www.aaaai.org/conditions-treatments/just-for-kids/stinging-insect-matching-game>] (American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology)

Clinical Trials

- ClinicalTrials.gov: Insect Bites and Stings [[https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=\(insect+OR+mosquito+OR+bee\)+AND+\(bites+OR+stings\)&aggFilters=status:not%20rec](https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=(insect+OR+mosquito+OR+bee)+AND+(bites+OR+stings)&aggFilters=status:not%20rec)]  (National Institutes of Health)

Journal Articles

References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

- Article: High exposure to malaria vector bites despite high use of bednets...
[<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40635025>]
- Article: Simulium larvae susceptibility to temephos and the effect of 10 weeks...
[<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40598561>]
- Article: Molecular Diagnosis in Hymenoptera Allergy: Comparison of Euroline DPA-Dx and ImmunoCAP.
[<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40559888>]
- Insect Bites and Stings -- see more articles [<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Insect+Bites+and+Stings%22%5Bmajr%3Aexp%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND%22last+1+Year%22+%5Bdat%5D+NOT+%28letter%5Bpt%5D+OR+case+reports%5Bpt%5D+OR+editorial%5Bpt%5D+OR+comment%5Bpt%5D%29+AND+free+full+text%5Bsb%5D+>]

Find an Expert

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [<https://www.cdc.gov/>]
Also in Spanish [<https://www.cdc.gov/spanish/>]
- National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases [<https://www.niaid.nih.gov/>] 

Children

- Hey! A Bee Stung Me! [<https://kidshealth.org/en/kids/bee.html>] (Nemours Foundation)
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/kids/bee.html>]
- Hey! A Fire Ant Stung Me! [<https://kidshealth.org/en/kids/fire-ant.html>] (Nemours Foundation)
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/kids/fire-ant.html>]
- Hey! A Flea Bit Me! [<https://kidshealth.org/en/kids/flea.html>] (Nemours Foundation)
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/kids/flea.html>]
- Hey! A Gnat Bit Me! [<https://kidshealth.org/en/kids/gnat.html>] (Nemours Foundation)
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/kids/gnat.html>]
- Hey! A Louse Bit Me! [<https://kidshealth.org/en/kids/louse.html>] (Nemours Foundation)
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/kids/louse.html>]
- Hey! A Mosquito Bit Me! (For Kids) [<https://kidshealth.org/en/kids/mosquito.html>] (Nemours Foundation)
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/kids/mosquito.html>]
- Using Insect Repellents Safely (For Parents) [<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/repellent-use-safety.html>]
(Nemours Foundation)
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/parents/repellent-use-safety.html>]

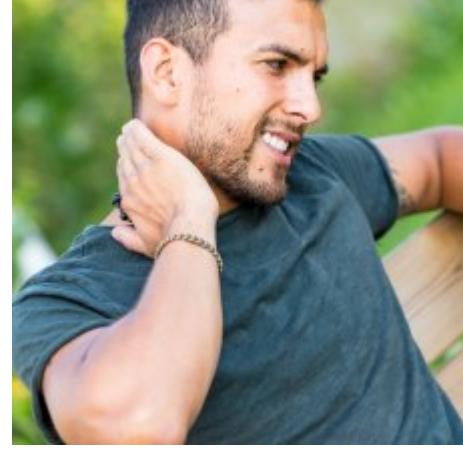
Teenagers

- Bug Bites and Stings [<https://kidshealth.org/en/teens/bug-bites.html>] (Nemours Foundation)
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/teens/bug-bites.html>]

Patient Handouts

- Anaphylaxis [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000844.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000844.htm>]
- Bee, wasp, hornet, or yellow jacket sting [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002847.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/002847.htm>]
- Fire ants [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002843.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/002843.htm>]

- Fleas [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001329.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/001329.htm>]
- Insect bites and stings [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000033.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000033.htm>]
- Wasp sting [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002857.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/002857.htm>]



MEDICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

- Anaphylaxis [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000844.htm>]
- Bee, wasp, hornet, or yellow jacket sting [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002847.htm>]
- Bug repellent safety [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001969.htm>]
- Caterpillars [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002860.htm>]
- Fire ants [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002843.htm>]
- Fleas [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001329.htm>]
- Insect bites and stings [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000033.htm>]
- Typhus [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001363.htm>]
- Wasp sting [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002857.htm>]

Related Health Topics

- Anaphylaxis [<https://medlineplus.gov/anaphylaxis.html>]
- Animal Bites [<https://medlineplus.gov/animalbites.html>]
- Bed Bugs [<https://medlineplus.gov/bedbugs.html>]
- Lyme Disease [<https://medlineplus.gov/lymedisease.html>]
- Mosquito Bites [<https://medlineplus.gov/mosquitobites.html>]
- Plague [<https://medlineplus.gov/plague.html>]
- Spider Bites [<https://medlineplus.gov/spiderbites.html>]
- Tick Bites [<https://medlineplus.gov/tickbites.html>]

The primary NIH organization for research on *Insect Bites and Stings* is the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases [<http://www.niaid.nih.gov/>]

Other Languages

Find health information in languages other than English [<https://medlineplus.gov/languages/insectbitesandstings.html>] on *Insect Bites and Stings*

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