

Bites and Stings Advice

The symptoms you have following an animal, human or insect bite or sting have been assessed by a clinician and they feel it is safe for you to go home. You may be/have been experiencing pain, some localised swelling, and redness at the site of the bite or sting, but the following actions will usually help you:

Things you should do	Things you shouldn't do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply ice or a cold compress for at least 10 minutes to reduce swelling, if present. • Take the recommended medication e.g. Paracetamol or ibuprofen or antihistamine – these can be bought over the counter from a pharmacy or local shops. Follow the instructions on the packet/bottle carefully. • Take any antibiotics you have been given as instructed on the packet/bottle. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try not to scratch, as this will cause the site to swell and itch more and increase the chance of infection. • Use Calamine lotion – although it may soothe the itch, it then dries and the residue can then make the itch worse. • Use home remedies, such as vinegar and bicarbonate of soda, as they're unlikely to help.

It is quite normal for the pain, swelling and itchiness to last a few days. However, if you get any further reactions later on (after several hours) such as rash with red or whitish raised patches which are itchy, joint swelling, change in voice, choking sensation, facial swelling please attend an Emergency Department or follow up at your GP practise (see page 4).

Inflamed bites or stings

Bites and stings may sometimes become quite large, with redness and swelling that goes well beyond the site of the sting or bite and maybe painful. Again, you should take Paracetamol or Ibuprofen and elevate – that means keeping your hand raised higher than your heart - use a sling if you've been given one - or your heel higher than your hip, to help prevent/reduce any swelling, and use a cold compress or ice pack.

Infected bites or stings

You have been assessed by a clinician about the risk of your injury becoming infected. They will have considered a number of factors including what (or who) you were bitten by, where you were bitten, the type of bite, and your susceptibility to

infection. All human bites that are less than 72 hours (3 days) old will have been treated with **either a 3 day or 5 day course of antibiotics** and any infection should clear up within seven days. If your bite wound is more than 72 hours old, and there is no sign of infection, antibiotics are not usually recommended, as it is likely that the wound will heal normally. You should see your GP if the infection or wound gets worse, if it has not cleared up/healed within seven days, or if you start to feel unwell.

Tick Bites

What are Ticks?

Ticks are small spider-like creatures that are mainly found in woodland and heath areas. They attach to your skin, suck your blood and can cause Lyme disease in some cases.

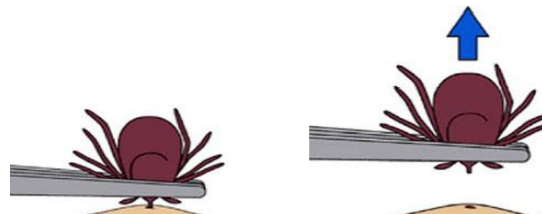
What do I do if I have been bitten by a tick?

If you find a tick attached to your skin, there's no need to panic—the key is to remove the tick as soon as possible. There are several tick removal devices on the market, but a plain set of fine-tipped tweezers work very well.

Things you should do	Things you shouldn't do
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remove the tick as soon as possible using fine-tipped tweezers• If a rash appears at the site of the bite or a fever develops, then you should get medical advice as soon as possible. Be sure to tell them about your recent tick bite, when the bite occurred, and where you most likely acquired the tick.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Twist the tick as this may leave the mouthparts in the skin.• Crush a tick with your fingers.• Use petroleum jelly, alcohol, nail polish remover, or lit matches to try and dislodge the tick as this may cause it to regurgitate potentially infectious material into bite.

How to remove a tick

1. Clean around the tick bite
2. Using fine-tipped tweezers get your tweezers right down on your skin so you can grab as close as possible to the tick's head
3. Pull upward with steady, even pressure. Don't twist or jerk the tick; this can cause the mouth-parts to break off and remain in the skin. If this happens, remove the mouth-parts with tweezers.
4. After removing the tick, thoroughly clean the bite area and your hands with soap and water. **Dispose of a live tick by**
 - Putting it in alcohol
 - Placing it in a sealed bag/container
 - Wrapping it tightly in tape
 - Flushing it down the toilet



Advice about reducing the risk of being bitten or stung and avoiding tick bites

Things you should do	Things you shouldn't do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Keep skin covered by wearing long sleeves, long trousers, socks and shoes. ○ Take sensible precautions, especially if you have had a bad reaction to a sting or bite in the past. ○ Apply insect repellent to exposed skin – repellents that contain 50% DEET are most effective. ○ Avoid using products with strong perfumes (e.g. soaps, shampoos, and deodorants) as these attract insects. ○ Avoid areas where there is a greater chance of being stung such as outdoor settings with food and drink, compost and rubbish bins that attract stinging insects. ○ Remain calm and move away slowly if you encounter wasps, hornets or bees. ○ Keep food and drink covered when eating or drinking outside, particularly sweet things – wasps or bees can also get into open drink bottles or cans you're drinking from. ○ Keep insecticides approved for use on stinging insects readily available to kill stinging insects from a distance if necessary – stinging insects are not affected by insect repellents. ○ Keep doors and windows closed or put thin netting or door beads over them to prevent insects getting inside the house – also keep the windows of your car closed to stop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Don't wave your arms around or swat at wasps, hornets or bees ○ Wear brightly coloured clothing and flowery prints as these can attract insects. ○ Never disturb insect nests – if a nest is in your house or garden, arrange to have it removed by trained professionals. ○ Avoid camping near water, such as ponds and swamps – mosquitoes and horseflies are commonly found near water. ○ Run or scream near a dog, as dogs have a tendency to chase moving objects and often are startled by loud noises. ○ Greet a dog with an outstretched hand or try to pet it without letting it sniff you first ○ Humanise the dog (for

<p>insects getting inside</p> <p>Reduce tick bites by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Keeping to footpaths and avoiding long grass when out walking. ○ Tuck trousers into your socks. ○ Wear light-coloured fabrics that may help you spot a tick on your clothes. ○ Inspect your skin for ticks, particularly at the end of the day, including your head, neck and skin folds (armpits, groin, and waistband). ○ Check your children's head and neck areas, including their scalp making sure ticks are not brought home on your clothes. ○ Check your pets to help ensure they don't bring ticks into your home in their fur. 	<p>example allowing it to sleep on the furniture, beg for food), and do not hug or kiss it, as this makes it more difficult for the dog to distinguish between animal and master, and may increase the risk of biting.</p>
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Dial 999 for an ambulance immediately if you or someone else has symptoms of a severe reaction, such as:

- ♦ wheezing or difficulty breathing
- ♦ a swollen face, mouth or throat
- ♦ a fast heart rate
- ♦ dizziness or feeling faint
- ♦ difficulty swallowing
- ♦ **Change to voice**
- ♦ loss of consciousness

Tetanus

Tetanus is a potentially fatal infection of the muscles and nervous system.

If you are bitten by an animal, **you may be asked to contact your GP surgery to check your history of tetanus vaccinations**. A full course of tetanus immunisation consists of five doses of a tetanus vaccine. You should have received a full course of vaccinations when you were a child. However, if you have not received a full course, you **may** be given the initial dose and referred to your G.P. who will be able to complete the full course.

We may have asked you to come back in 2–3 days for your bite/sting to be reviewed – if you are better and don't wish to return, then please ring the department where you were seen to tell them.

If you are concerned about your progress, or if you have not improved within 10 days, we advise you to contact your GP or return to the Emergency Department/MIU department where you were seen.

References:

https://www.cdc.gov/ticks/removing_a_tick.html
<https://cks.nice.org.uk/topics/insect-bites-stings/>
<https://cks.nice.org.uk/topics/bites-human-animal/>
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/insect-bites-and-stings/>