

## Bites and Stings Advice (Animal/Insect)

The symptoms you have following an animal bite or insect 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"> <li>• Apply ice or a cold compress <b>for at least 10minutes</b> to reduce swelling, if present.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Take any antibiotics you have been given as instructed on the packet/bottle.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try not to scratch, as this will cause the site to swell and itch more and increase the chance of infection.</li> <li>• Use Calamine lotion – although it may soothe the itch, it then dries and the residue can then make the itch worse.</li> <li>• Use home remedies, such as vinegar and bicarbonate of soda, as they're unlikely to help.</li> </ul>

It is quite normal for the pain, swelling and itchiness to last a few days. However, if you get any further reactions later (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 the Emergency Department at the Grange University hospital and not the Minor injury unit (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 you were bitten/Stung by, where you were bitten/stung, the type of bite, and your susceptibility to infection. You would have been prescribed a short course (3 – 5 days) of antibiotics and any infection should clear up. 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 seek medical advice if the infection or wound gets worse, if it has not cleared up 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 works very well.

Things you should do:	Things you shouldn't do:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Remove the tick as soon as possible using fine-tipped tweezers</li><li>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.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Twist the tick as this may leave the mouthparts in the skin.</li><li>Crush a tick with your fingers.</li><li>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.</li></ul>

## 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 mouthparts to break off and remain in the skin. If this happens, remove the mouthparts with tweezers.
4. After removing the tick, thoroughly clean the bite area and your hands with soap and water.

## 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"> <li>○ Keep skin covered by wearing long sleeves, long trousers, socks and shoes.</li> <li>○ Take sensible precautions, especially if you have had a bad reaction to a sting or bite in the past.</li> <li>○ Apply insect repellent to exposed skin</li> <li>○ Avoid using products with strong perfumes (e.g. soaps, shampoos, and deodorants) as these attract insects.</li> <li>○ 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.</li> <li>○ Remain calm and move away slowly if you encounter wasps, hornets or bees.</li> <li>○ 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.</li> <li>○ Keep insecticides approved for use on stinging insects readily available to kill stinging insects from a distance if necessary.</li> <li>○ 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 insects getting inside</li> </ul> <p>Reduce tick bites by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Keeping to footpaths and avoiding long grass when out walking.</li> <li>○ Tuck trousers into your socks.</li> <li>○ Wear light-coloured fabrics that may help you spot a tick on your clothes.</li> <li>○ Inspect your skin for ticks, particularly at the end of the day, including your head, neck and skin folds (armpits, groin, and waistband).</li> <li>○ Check your children's head and neck areas, including their scalp, making sure ticks are not brought home on your clothes.</li> <li>○ Check your pets to ensure they don't bring ticks into your home in their fur.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Don't wave your arms around or swat at wasps, hornets or bees</li> <li>○ Wear brightly coloured clothing and flowery prints as these can attract insects.</li> <li>○ Never disturb insect nests – if a nest is in your house or garden, arrange to have it removed by trained professionals.</li> <li>○ Avoid camping near water, such as ponds and swamps – mosquitoes and horseflies are commonly found near water.</li> <li>○ Run or scream near a dog, as dogs tend to chase moving objects and often are startled by loud noises.</li> <li>○ Greet a dog with an outstretched hand or try to pet it without letting it sniff you first.</li> </ul>

## Tetanus

You would have been risk assessed for tetanus and if required given prophylactic vaccine injection to cover for tetanus. The attending clinician would have advised if any further follow up required. Kindly follow as advised.

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.

### **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

**If you are concerned about your progress, or if you have not improved within 5 - 7 days, we advise you to contact your GP or attend the Emergency Department at the Grange University Hospital (Not Minor injury unit).**

### **References:**

What to Do After a Tick Bite | Ticks | CDC

Definition | Background information | Insect bites and stings | CKS | NICE

Bites - human and animal | Health topics A to Z | CKS | NICE

Insect bites and stings - NHS

**If you are at all concerned then please contact the relevant  
Emergency Department: Grange University Hospital: 01633 493287  
Or Minor Injury Unit (MIU):  
Royal Gwent Hospital: 01633 234056  
Nevill Hall Hospital: 01873 732073  
Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr (YYF) MIU 01443 802353  
Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan (YAB) MIU: 01495 363318**

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Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg**