

Western Australian Poisons Information Centre



Western Tiger Snake

Insects

Spiders

Scorpions

Snakes

Marine
Animals

First-aid management of bites and stings



Government of Western Australia
Department of Health



Serious allergic reactions occur in approximately 2% of stings from ants, bees and wasps. Symptoms such as swelling of the face, lips and tongue, breathing difficulties or a generalised rash are potentially life-threatening and require urgent medical attention.

Insects

Bee stings: Remove the sting by scraping, never squeeze the site. Wash the area and apply antiseptic cream. Keep the sting site rested, elevated and cool. Local swelling and irritation may last for several days.

Wasp and Hornet stings: These do not leave a sting behind. Treat as for bee stings.

Ant and other insect bites: Treat as above.



Scorpions: Stings can be very painful and the pain may persist for several hours. Local redness and numbness often occur. Wash the sting site; apply antiseptic and a cool pack. Give oral analgesia such as paracetamol. Australian scorpions do not cause severe symptoms.

Centipedes: Apply antiseptic to the bite site. Local redness, itching and pain are common. Severe pain sometimes occurs.

Spiders

Red-back spider (*Lactrodectus*):

Wash the bite site; apply antiseptic and a cool pack. In the majority of cases only minor pain and redness occur. In 25% of cases, severe pain and other symptoms such as sweating, headache, vomiting and muscle pain develop over the first few hours. Hospital assessment is required for severe symptoms.

White-tailed spider (*Lampona*): There is no clear scientific evidence that bites from these spiders cause skin ulceration. Treat as for bites from spiders-other.

Spiders-other: Wash the bite site, apply antiseptic and see your GP if signs of local infection develop.

(This information only applies to the regions of South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory).



First Aid for Snake Bites

Spotted Mulga Snake

Key points:

Treat all bites, including suspected bites as potentially life threatening

Do not wash, squeeze or puncture the bite site

Apply a pressure immobilisation bandage (see diagram)

Keep the victim calm and still

Do not give food or alcohol

Do not allow the victim to walk.

Get urgent medical/ambulance assistance. Call 000 for the ambulance

Do not attempt to catch or kill the snake

Bites to the head and trunk must be bandaged as firmly as possible

Apply a broad pressure bandage from below upwards and over the bite site as soon as possible. Do not remove trousers, as the movement of doing so will assist venom to enter blood stream. Keep the bitten leg still.

The bandage should be as tight as you would apply to a sprained ankle. The patient should avoid any unnecessary movements.

Extend the bandage as high as possible.

Apply a splint to the leg, immobilising joints either side of the bite

Bind it firmly to as much of the leg as possible. Walking should be restricted



Also used for Blue Ringed Octopus & Funnel Web Spiders

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13 11 26

24 hours per day

Marine

Jellyfish (non-tropical):

Apply vinegar or Stingose® then shower in hot water for at least 15 minutes.

Blue-ringed octopus:

Muscle paralysis with breathing difficulties can occur within minutes of the bite. The bite may not be painful. Apply a pressure immobilization bandage, perform mouth to mouth resuscitation as required and seek urgent medical attention.



Fish stings:

Immerse the sting site in hot water (as hot as can be tolerated for at least 30 minutes). Medical assessment is required for severe pain or if the pain is not relieved by the hot water

