



Insect Stings in Children



Overview

Are insect stings dangerous for your child? Bees, wasps, hornets and yellow jackets all cause painful stings. So do fire ants. Here's what you need to know.

Symptoms

First, let's look at children who aren't allergic to insect stings. A sting typically causes a mild or moderate skin reaction. Your child may have redness, swelling and itching. The skin at the site of the sting may feel warm. You may see a raised bump. And sometimes, you may see a small spot of blood. A sting can be very painful, but it's usually not dangerous.

Treatment for skin reactions

How do we treat a skin reaction? First, try to calm your child. If the stinger is still in their skin, gently scrape it out. Wash their skin with soap and water. Apply a cold compress. And use over-the-counter pain relievers, creams and lotions to help with the pain and itching.

Anaphylaxis

For children who are allergic to insect stings, a sting doesn't just affect the skin. It can cause a severe reaction throughout the body. This can include things like breathing problems, vomiting and diarrhea. Your child's blood pressure may drop to dangerous levels. They may faint. We call this type of response "anaphylaxis." This is a medical emergency. It can lead to death. Get medical care immediately.