



Bites and Stings

Expected reactions:

- **Mosquitos:** Expect itchy, red bumps lasting 3 days with swelling for as many as 7 days. Some kids may get a LLR (large local reaction, aka “Skeeter Syndrome”), see page 2.
- **Chiggers:** Expect itchy, red bumps lasting 3 days with swelling for as many as 7 days
- **Fleas:** Expect multiple small itchy, red bumps clustered together where clothes fit tightly.
- **Bedbugs:** Expect 2-3 red itchy bumps in a row. Often found in the morning since biting occurs at night.
- **Horseflies and deer flies:** Expect itchy, red bumps lasting 3 days with swelling for as many as 7 days
- **Gnats:** Expect itchy, red bumps lasting 3 days with swelling for as many as 7 days
- **Ants:** Expect painful and itchy red bumps and eventual white/yellow fluid filled blisters or pimples taking 7-10 days to fully resolve. Don’t pop the blisters.
- **Blister beetles:** Expect a painful blister 24-48 hours after contact. Don’t pop the blisters.
- **Bees, wasps, and yellow jackets:** Expect severe pain or burning lasting 1 to 2 hours, followed by increasing swelling for 48 hours. Redness should last up to 3 days and swelling up to 7 days. Some kids may get a LLR (large local reaction), see page 2.

Don’t worry if:

- **You see 1 hive at the bite site:** A large hive at the bite does not mean your child has an allergy.
- **The bite looks red:** Redness does not mean the bite is infected and we expect it to last 3 days.
- **You see localized swelling:** The swelling is usually worse in the morning after lying down all night. It will improve after standing for a few hours. Stings on the face can cause a lot of swelling around the eye which can look worrisome but is not serious.

Prevention of Insect Bites:

1. General Tips:

- Wear long pants, a long-sleeved shirt and a hat.
- Avoid being outside when the bugs are most active. Many insects that cause itchy bites are most active at sunrise or sunset. Examples are chiggers, no-see-ums, and mosquitoes.

2. Apply DEET Products on skin

- DEET is a very effective bug repellent, which also repels ticks, approved by the American Academy of Pediatrics for infants and children **2 months and older**.
- **Use 30% DEET or less.** Use 30% DEET if you need 6 hours of protection. Use 10% DEET if you only need protection for 2 hours. Warn older children who apply their own DEET to use less. A total of 3 or 4 drops can protect the whole body.
- Don't apply on hands if your child sucks on their thumb or fingers, near eyes or mouth, or on skin covered by clothing. Also avoid areas with sunburn or rash.
- Wash it off with soap and water when your child comes indoors.

3. Apply Permethrin Products on clothing

- Products that contain permethrin work well on clothing to repel insects and ticks. Do not put permethrin on the skin. Examples of these products are Duranon or Permanone.
- Don’t forget you can also use on other outdoor items (mosquito screens, sleeping bags).

Symptom Treatment:

- **For itching or pain**
 - Apply 1% hydrocortisone **ointment** 3 times a day until the itch is gone
 - Take Zyrtec (cetirizine) oral antihistamine (safe for 6 months and up)
 - Apply firm, sharp, direct, steady pressure (like with a fingernail, pen cap, or other object) on the bite for 10 seconds to reduce the itch
 - Try the “BUG BITE THING,” a suction tool that can be bought on Amazon
 - Make a paste with colloidal oatmeal: mix it with water and then apply to the bite; rinse off and pat dry after 10-15 minutes
 - Give acetaminophen or ibuprofen as needed.
 - Rub an ice cube on the bite for 20 minutes.
 - **What probably won't help:** Topical Benadryl, baking soda paste, oral antibiotics
- **For possible infection:** Wash the sore and use an antibiotic ointment such as bacitracin, 3 times per day. Cover the scab with a Band-Aid to prevent scratching and spreading.

More pronounced and weird reactions:

- Large Local Reaction (LLR): This is typically seen in response to an allergy to mosquito saliva (aka Skeeter Syndrome) but can happen in response to a bee/wasp/yellow jacket sting as well. Characteristics include redness and swelling within hours of the bite and worsening over 1-2 days. The swelling can be significant, including even an entire arm or leg. **The main difference between a LLR and an infection is that a LLR reaction starts within hours, but a skin infection happens several days after the bite.** A LLR can cause intense itching. A true allergic reaction, causing trouble breathing, is very rare. You can expect kids who develop a LLR they will always react this way to these bites. It is recommended to take a daily antihistamine like Zyrtec during the time of year when mosquitos are most active and when bites are difficult to avoid. Though this won't completely prevent a LLR, it can help swelling from being as dramatic. Avoid topical Benadryl or antihistamine cream as it may worsen the LLR.
- Allergic Reaction: Symptoms include not only swelling localized to the site of the bite, BUT ALSO hives (very itchy rash with new lesions progressively appearing to entire body) AND another allergic reaction symptom (vomiting, trouble breathing, wheezing, swelling to face).

Concerned about less common bites? Click or scan below.

<p>Spider bites</p> 	<p>Tick removal and post-bite care</p> 	<p>Scorpion sting care</p> 	<p>Centipede sting care</p> 	<p>Summer penile syndrome</p> 
---	--	--	---	---

Call Back If...

- Trouble breathing or swallowing occurs (mainly during the 2 hours after the sting.) **Call 911.**
- Swelling becomes huge
- Infected scab not better after 48 hours of antibiotic ointment
- Bite looks infected (spreading redness gets bigger after 48 hours or there are red streaks extending from the bite)