Vantage Pharmacy

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Opening Times Monday - Friday 8.30am to 7pm Saturday, and Sunday Closed Bank Holidays Closed

Your FREE Healthy Living Leaflet for June 2024

- 1. What insects can bite?
- 2. What insects can sting?
- 3. How do insects bite?
- 4. What causes the sting?
- 5. What are the symptoms of insect bites?
- 6. What should I do if I am bitten?
- 7. When should I get medical advice?
- 8. What treatment is there for insect bites?
- 9. How can I avoid being bitten?
- 10. Which countries could put me at risk of malaria?



Answers on the bottom of P2

Insect Bites and Stings

Insect bites or stings are not usually serious and get better in a few days. But sometimes they can become infected or cause a serious allergic reaction.

In the UK, insects that bite include midges, mosquitoes, fleas, bedbugs and although not strictly insects, spiders, mites and ticks, which are arachnids. Insects that sting include bees, scabies from mites, and malaria from mosquitoes in certain parts of the world. The main symptoms of an insect bite or sting are:

Pain where you were bitten or stung

• A small, swollen lump on the skin The lump may look red. It may be more difficult to see on black or brown skin, but you should be able to feel it.

wasps and hornets. An insect bites you by making a hole in your skin to feed. Most insects sting as a defence by injecting venom into your skin. Bites from some insects can also cause illnesses, such a Lyme disease from ticks,



What to do if you've been bitten or stung by an insect?

You can often treat an insect bite or sting without seeing a GP. If anything is left on or in your skin, the first thing you need to do is

remove it carefully.

If there is nothing in your skin, or you've removed it, wash your skin with soap and water nest in trees or in a roof space. If a nest is in, or to help lower the chance of infection. The bite or sting should get better in a few days. There are some things you can do to ease your symptoms:

DO:

- Put an ice pack wrapped in a cloth or a ~ clean cloth soaked in cold water on the bite or sting for at least 20 minutes, if its swollen
- Keep the area raised if you can ✓
- Take painkillers such as paracetamol or ✓ ibuprofen if the sting is painful
- √ Use antihistamines to relieve any itching (but do not use antihistamine cream if you Insect repellent had caterpillar hairs on your skin)
- Use a hydrocortisone cream to reduce ✓ itching and swelling

DO NOT:

- Scratch the bite or sting as it could get × infected
- Use home remedies such as bicarbonate × of soda to treat the bite or sting.

You should speak to a pharmacist if:

- You've been bitten or stung and there's a * lot of swelling or blistering
- There's pus, which indicates infection. your pharmacist can treat this in some instances

Preventing insect bites and stings

Most insects are more active during the early mornings and late evenings. If you are outside, try to sit somewhere in the sun with a breeze as

some insects don't like these conditions. **Insect hotspots**

Be wary of insect hotspots such as outdoor areas where food is served e.g. a pub garden. Cover food and drink when eating or drinking outside, especially sweet things such as fizzy, sugary drinks.



Insect nests

Never disturb insect nests - such as a wasp near to, your house, arrange to have it removed professionally.

Keep insects out

Doors and windows should remain closed or covered with thin protective netting to prevent insects getting inside the house. Keep car windows closed to stop insects getting inside.

Cover up

Cover exposed skin by wearing long sleeves and trousers. To avoid tick bites, it is advisable to cover up in long grassland. As well as this, always check yourself and pets following a grassy walk.

Be aware that product such as soaps, shampoos and deodorants with strong scents can attract insects. Insect repellent is worth using if you are spending a lot of time outdoors. Apply repellents that contain 50% DEET (diethyltoluamide) as they are most effective. Apply to exposed skin and clothing.

Travelling abroad

There's a risk of catching diseases such as malaria from insect bites in certain parts of the world. such as:

- Africa
- Asia ٠
- South America

It's therefore necessary to be aware of any risks before travelling to these areas, and to get any necessary medication or vaccinations prior to travelling.

> To learn more about this or any other health condition that is concerning you, have a chat with one of our trained team.

repellent. Q10, Africa, Asia and South America. insect hotspots, keep windows and doors shut, cover up with appropriate clothing, wear insect antihistamines to relieve itching, use hydrocortisone cream to reduce itching and swelling. Q9, Avoid Q7, The bite or sting starts swelling or blistering, if there is pus. Q8, Take painkillers if painful, use has occurred, a small, swollen lump on the skin. Q6, Clean the skin, keep the affected area raised. small hole in your skin to teed. Q4, Injecting venom into the skin. Q5, Pain in the area where the bite Answers: Q1, Midges, mosquitoes, fleas and bedbugs. Q2, Bees, wasps and hornets. Q3, Make a