

***“You cannot swim for new horizons until you have courage to lose sight of the shore.”***  
– William Faulkner

This quote is fantastic because it's a great reminder that sometimes you have to let go of what's comfortable in order to bring about positive change to your life. Some people would call it “*stepping out of your comfort zone*” and that's never easy. It truly does take courage. I experienced this personally when I recently packed up and moved my son and me from the place I'd called home for nearly 30 years. Boy was it scary. But the reality is that I never could've imagined the positive direction my life would take when I decided to swim for my new horizon. It's a constant reminder for me that God truly is in control. There are still days when I can't believe I just up and moved, but it was one of the best things I've ever done. Hiking used to be my happy place and my escape from the rat race of northern Virginia. But now, home is also my happy place. Martin Luther King once said, “*But I know, somehow, that only when is it dark enough can you see the stars.*” I understood his statement the first night in my new home when I looked up and could see every star in the sky because there was no light pollution impairing by perfect view. Almost every night before I go to bed, I go out on my deck and look up at the stars. It comforts me and reminds me that had I not had the courage, I might never have found peace. Be brave. Take risks. Remember, being brave isn't the absence of fear. It's having fear but still finding a way through it. Step outside of your comfort zone and reap the rewards. Please reach out to me if you have any questions.

Yours in health,  
Susan Monaco, Certified Health Coach  
Health and Wellness by Design  
[www.healthnwellnessbydesign.com](http://www.healthnwellnessbydesign.com)  
[susan@healthnwellnessbydesign.com](mailto:susan@healthnwellnessbydesign.com)

### **Natural Help for Insect Bites and Stings**



It's that time of year when you want to get outside and enjoy the weather before the heat and the humidity of the summer drives you back indoors. Not everyone is as crazy as I am to go out hiking in everything from -2 degree to 100-degree + weather. The good news about right now is that the temperature is practically perfect for outdoor activities. The bad news is it brings out the bugs. Ticks are a big issue because those little creatures can reap havoc on our bodies. So since now is when the bugs come to life, it inspired me to write about what can help if you have a negative encounter.

Once you're stung or bitten by one of these critters, the faster you treat it, the more effective that treatment will be. If you ever get stung by a bee, the first thing you must do is remove the stinger. Otherwise, it will continue to push its venom into your skin. The best way to remove the stinger is with your fingernail or a dull knife. Whatever you do, don't pinch it because that will release more venom and toxins.

You also have to figure out how severe the bite or sting is. If you're allergic to whatever bit you, if you feel faint, your pulse rate increases, you have trouble breathing or you have swelling in your mouth and/or throat, seek medical attention immediately.

Anyway, in my continuing effort to teach you to use food as medicine, I'm going to lay out some healing foods for you in the case of a bite or sting. Remember that smells we enjoy are often the ones that repel insects.

**Garlic:** While garlic has a large number of medicinal properties, most people don't know that it actually plays two different roles when it comes to insects: a repellent and a treatment. It was actually the Italians who spearheaded a study in which participants who applied garlic oil to their skin were well protected against bites. Crushed garlic can also be used as a treatment when applied to a sting or a bite. You can also eat some raw cloves, but friends, in addition to insects, may be turned away.

**Onions:** You can rub raw onion slices directly on a sting or bite to reduce its inflammation. Instead of throwing away the skin of an onion, leave it on when cooking because it contains quite a bit of quercetin. Hopefully, you remember my newsletter from February 2022, which told you about all the benefits of this wonder supplement. When combined with zinc, it's a powerhouse to help fight the flu and the no longer existent COVID.

**Cinnamon:** I love adding this to oatmeal and sweet potatoes, but it is another powerhouse when it comes to repelling insects. One simple thing you can do is add a couple drops of cinnamon oil to lotion or sunscreen to make a natural repellent before you venture outside. Use enough oil that you can actually smell to have an impact. Additionally, pure cinnamon seems to help kill the larva of mosquitos.

**Clove:** Not only is this oil great for oral health, it's also a wonderful natural insect repellent. Ideally, mix one part of clove oil with 10 parts of witch hazel or olive oil and apply it directly to your skin. You'll need to reapply it every 1-2 hours, but more often when you're sweating. You can also spray this solution onto outdoor areas such as fences to keep pesky critters away.

**Basil:** This herb, most commonly used in cooking, has another interesting use. People in Africa and India often rub their skin with the fresh leaves to repel insects.

**Lemongrass:** Most people are familiar with this herb from Thai cooking, but it has some wonderful insect repellent characteristics. It's closely related to citronella, a very well-known mosquito repellent. Simply crush it up and rub it on your skin before you head outside. You'll likely end up smelling like lemonade, which is much nicer and less toxic than DEET.

**Apple Cider Vinegar:** Isn't it interesting that I just wrote about ACV in March 2023? While I talked about how it improves skin health, I failed to mention that it can decrease redness and swelling from an insect bite or sting. Immediately after you remove the stinger, apply ACV by wetting a cotton ball and taping it onto the site of the sting.

**Baking Soda:** While this ingredient is most commonly used in baking, you can use it to make a paste to help relieve any inflammation from a sting or bite. Simply mix one teaspoon of baking soda with some water and place it on a cloth or cotton ball to use as a compress on the bite or sting for about 20 minutes.

The above list is by no means complete, but hopefully gives you some good options. Also keep in mind that unfortunately, insects are attracted to sugar and alcohol. Therefore, it's best to avoid eating or drinking anything containing these items before you go outside.

Have a wonderful month!