INSECT STINGS

Most people who are stung by an insect of the Hymenoptera order (bees, wasps, hornets, stinging ants) experience only minor discomfort of stinging, swelling and redness at the site. This is a normal reaction which lasts only minutes or hours at the most. Other people, however may develop a generalized reaction which can be dangerous or even lethal. If you have had a severe local reaction or an immediate and widespread reaction, it is possible that you are allergic to insect stings.

AVOIDING THE STING

1. Know what the insect looks like and where it lives. If one of them attaches itself to your clothing, use caution in brushing it off. Stay away from its environment.

2. Avoid attracting the insect. If you are going into the insect's habitat, do not lure it to your body with brilliant colors and fragrances. Do not look or smell like an exotic flower.

3. Minimize the exposed parts of your body. Cover your arms and legs – limit the target area.

WHAT IF YOU ARE STUNG?

1. Remove the "stinger" and venom sac (if left) carefully. Even though the insect has gone, these will continue to exude venom. Do not squeeze it – tease or scrape it off carefully.

2. Wash the area with soap and water if available.

3. Apply ice or cold compresses. A paste of baking soda and water may lessen the swelling.

WHAT SYMPTOMS ARE DANGEROUS?

Wheezing, itchy throat, shortness of breath, headache, abdominal cramping, rapid swelling or fainting.

If you develop ANY of these symptoms, go to your nearest health facility immediately.

SELF-ADMINISTERED FIRST-AID

Commercial products are available in pharmacies. They contain injectable epinephrine and an oral antihistamine. If you have had a severe reaction, ask your physician if you should carry one of these first-aid kits with you.

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:  

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________