

Helpful information provided by the Department of Emergency Medicine

Insect Bite

Your caregiver has diagnosed you as having an insect bite. An insect bite or sting appears as a red lump in the skin that sometimes has a tiny hole in the center. The most common bites or stings are from mosquitoes, fleas, bedbugs, chiggers, ants, wasps, bees, or other insects.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Apply a cold compress for 10 to 20 minutes every hour to reduce swelling and itching.
- After 24 to 48 hours, a warm compress may be soothing and will help to decrease swelling.
- To relieve itching and swelling, you may use:
 - Diphenhydramine (Benadryl[®]), available over the counter. Take medication as directed. **DO NOT DRINK ALCOHOL OR DRIVE WHILE TAKING THIS MEDICATION.**
 - Hydrocortisone cream 0.1% as directed, directly on to the bite(s).
 - Calamine lotion with diphenhydramine as directed. *Do not take with oral diphenhydramine (Benadryl[®]).*
- Use acetaminophen (Tylenol[®]) or ibuprofen (Advil[®] or Motrin[®]) for relief of pain and discomfort as needed.

SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION IF:

- None of the above helps within 2 to 3 days.
- The area becomes red, warm, tender, and swollen beyond the area of the bite or sting
- An oral temperature above temp 100.4 F (38.3 C) develops, not controlled by medication.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ATTENTION IF:

You have *symptoms* (problems) of an *allergic reaction* (wheezing or difficulty breathing, chest pain, fainting, raised red patches on the skin that itch, *nausea* (feeling sick to your stomach), vomiting, cramping or diarrhea. **These may be early signs of a generalized or anaphylactic reaction.**