

JUNE 2021 CCDC SAFETY MESSAGE

BITES AND STINGS

With warmer weather more people are outdoors and encounters with biting and stinging creatures increase. The American Association of Dermatology and the CDC offer the following advice for preventing and treating bites and stings.

To help prevent bug bites, dermatologists recommend the following tips:

1. **Use insect repellent.** To protect against mosquitoes, ticks, and other bugs, use insect repellent that contains 20 to 30 percent DEET on exposed skin and clothing. Always follow the instructions on the repellent and reapply as directed. If you are also wearing sunscreen, apply your sunscreen first, let it dry, and then apply the insect repellent. Do not use sunscreen that contains insect repellent, as sunscreen must be applied liberally and often while insect repellent should be applied sparingly.
2. **Wear appropriate clothing.** If you know you are going to be out at night or hiking in a densely wooded area, dress appropriately to prevent bug bites. Cover exposed skin as much as possible by wearing long-sleeved shirts, pants, socks, and closed shoes instead of sandals. For additional protection, pull your socks up over your pants and tuck your shirt into your pants.
3. **Treat clothing and gear with permethrin.** Use 0.5% permethrin to treat clothing and gear (such as boots, pants, socks, and tents) or buy permethrin-treated clothing and gear.
 - a. Permethrin is an insecticide that kills or repels mosquitoes.
 - b. Permethrin-treated clothing provides protection after multiple washings.
 - c. Read product information to find out how long the protection will last.
 - d. If treating items, yourself, follow the product instructions.
 - e. Do not use permethrin products directly on skin.
 - f. You can also pre-treat outer layers of clothing with insect repellent containing the active ingredient Permethrin. Follow the directions carefully and allow the clothes to dry for at least two hours before wearing them.
4. **Know where to expect ticks.** Ticks live in grassy, brushy, or wooded areas, or even on animals. Spending time outside walking your dog, camping, gardening, or hunting could bring you in close contact with ticks. Many people get ticks in their own yard or neighborhood. Avoid wooded and brushy areas with high grass and leaf litter. Walk in the center of trails.

To treat bug bites and stings at home, dermatologists recommend the following tips:

1. **For painful bites**, such as a bee sting, take an over-the-counter painkiller, such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen. Always follow the directions on the label and use the correct dose.
2. **For bites that itch**, apply an ice pack or an over-the-counter anti-itch cream, such as hydrocortisone. Another option is to take an over-the-counter oral antihistamine.
3. **To reduce swelling**, apply an ice pack to the bite.
4. **If you experience any serious symptoms** after a bug bite, such as a rash, fever, or body aches, see your doctor or a board-certified dermatologist immediately. Make sure you tell the doctor about your recent bite so that they can examine you for transmitted disease.
5. **Shower soon after being outdoors.** Showering within two hours of coming indoors has been shown to reduce your risk of getting tickborne diseases. Showering may help wash off unattached ticks and it is a good opportunity to do a tick check.

THINK SMART, BE AWARE, BE FLEXIBLE, BE EDUCATED (SAFE)