

## **Insect Stings**

Most of us have had the painful experience of insect stings or bites. When the sting occurs, there is an immediate, sharp pricking and burning sensation which lasts several minutes, followed by the formation of a red raised welt that may itch and feel hot. Most signs of the sting will be gone within 12 hours though redness and swelling may last for 24-48 hours.

### **General Treatment**

\* If there is a stinger, remove it by scraping with a needle or blade. Do not pull this stinger out with tweezers since this may cause more venom to be injected.

\* Place ice on sting.

\* For topical relief of itching try any of the following: baking soda paste, hydrocortisone cream, lotions with menthol, meat tenderizer or dilute household ammonia.

\* For relief of itching, antihistamines may be helpful. Benadryl Elixir cough syrup or Chlor-Trimeton are antihistamines available without prescription. Two over-the-counter preparations that will help with itching are Itch-X and Pramagel. They are applied topically four times daily.

Some stinging insects are scavengers and may transmit germs when they sting. Contact the office if pus, new swelling, or tenderness appear in the area of the sting. Multiple stings (usually more than four) may cause a toxic reaction, characterized by fever, diarrhea, vomiting, headache, and swelling. Please contact the office if your child has gotten multiple stings and begins to show any of these symptoms. Although the affected area was not initially swollen, you may notice warmth, redness, and swelling the following day. This is common and should not cause alarm.

Allergic reactions to insect stings are unusual, symptoms such as difficulty breathing, swelling in other areas of the body, fainting, or abdominal pain suggest an allergic reaction and, if any of these occur, please call our office immediately.