

## Chapter 1 : How to Treat a Wasp or Hornet Sting: 10 Steps (with Pictures)

*Determine what stung you. The initial first aid for a bee or wasp sting will depend upon which insect stung you. In both cases, however, first aid will consist of reducing the discomfort and swelling to the area.*

What do I need to know about an insect bite or sting? Most insect bites and stings are not dangerous and go away without treatment. Common examples of insects that bite or sting are bees, ticks, mosquitoes, spiders, and ants. What are the signs and symptoms of an allergic reaction to an insect bite or sting? Mild symptoms include a red bump, pain, swelling, and itching. Anaphylaxis symptoms include throat tightness, trouble breathing, tingling, dizziness, and wheezing. Anaphylaxis is a sudden, life-threatening reaction that needs immediate treatment. How is an allergic reaction to an insect bite or sting treated? Antihistamines decrease mild symptoms such as itching and rash. Epinephrine is medicine used to treat severe allergic reactions such as anaphylaxis. What steps do I need to take for signs or symptoms of anaphylaxis? Immediately give 1 shot of epinephrine only into the outer thigh muscle. Leave the shot in place as directed. Your healthcare provider may recommend you leave it in place for up to 10 seconds before you remove it. This helps make sure all of the epinephrine is delivered. Call and go to the emergency department, even if the shot improved symptoms. Do not drive yourself. Bring the used epinephrine shot with you. What should I do if an insect bites or stings me? Scrape the stinger out with your fingernail, edge of a credit card, or a knife blade. Do not squeeze the wound. Gently wash the area with soap and water. Ticks must be removed as soon as possible so you do not get diseases passed through tick bites. Ask your healthcare provider for more information on tick bites and how to remove ticks. What can I do to care for my bite or sting wound? Elevate the affected area. Prop the wound above the level of your heart, if possible. Elevate the area for 10 to 20 minutes each hour or as directed by your healthcare provider. Soak a clean washcloth in cold water, wring it out, and put it on the bite or sting. Use the compress for 10 to 20 minutes each hour or as directed by your healthcare provider. After 24 to 48 hours, change to warm compresses. Apply a baking soda paste. Add water to baking soda to make a thick paste. Put the paste on the area for 5 minutes. Rinse gently to remove the paste. What safety precautions do I need to take if I am at risk for anaphylaxis? Keep 2 shots of epinephrine with you at all times. You may need a second shot, because epinephrine only works for about 20 minutes and symptoms may return. Your healthcare provider can show you and family members how to give the shot. Check the expiration date every month and replace it before it expires. Create an action plan. Your healthcare provider can help you create a written plan that explains the allergy and an emergency plan to treat a reaction. The plan explains when to give a second epinephrine shot if symptoms return or do not improve after the first. Give copies of the action plan and emergency instructions to family members, work and school staff, and daycare providers. Show them how to give a shot of epinephrine. Carry medical alert identification. Wear medical alert jewelry or carry a card that says you have an insect allergy. Ask your healthcare provider where to get these items. What can I do to prevent an insect bite or sting? Do not wear bright-colored or flower-print clothing when you plan to spend time outdoors. Do not use hairspray, perfumes, or aftershave. Do not leave food out. Empty any standing water. Wash containers with soap and water every 2 days. Put screens on all open windows and doors. Put insect repellent that contains DEET on skin that is showing when you go outside. Put insect repellent at the top of your boots, bottom of pant legs, and sleeve cuffs. Wear long sleeves, pants, and shoes. Use citronella candles outdoors to help keep mosquitoes away. Put a tick and flea collar on pets. Call for signs or symptoms of anaphylaxis, such as trouble breathing, swelling in your mouth or throat, or wheezing. You may also have itching, a rash, hives, or feel like you are going to faint. When should I seek immediate care? You are stung on your tongue or in your throat. A white area forms around the bite. You are sweating badly or have body pain. You think you were bitten or stung by a poisonous insect. When should I contact my healthcare provider? You have a fever. The area becomes red, warm, tender, and swollen beyond the area of the bite or sting. You have questions or concerns about your condition or care. Care Agreement You have the right to help plan your care. Learn about your health condition and how it may be treated. Discuss treatment options with your healthcare providers to decide what care you want to receive. You always have the right to refuse treatment. The above

## **DOWNLOAD PDF WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I AM BITTEN OR STUNG?**

information is an educational aid only. It is not intended as medical advice for individual conditions or treatments. Talk to your doctor, nurse or pharmacist before following any medical regimen to see if it is safe and effective for you.

### Chapter 2 : Eek! I got stung! What should I do now? - Jennifer Jandt

*What should I do if I am bitten by a snake? If you or someone you know are bitten by a snake, right away call Poison Help ( ), which connects you to your local poison center. The experts at your poison center will help you determine if the snake is venomous.*

Most reactions to a sting are mild to moderate and do not involve a severe allergy. Severe allergic sting reactions are treated with epinephrine adrenaline , either self-injected or by a doctor. However, some symptoms that develop after a bee sting signal a severe allergic reaction and need urgent medical attention. Without treatment, anaphylactic shock may occur very quickly. This can be fatal. Symptoms that may signal anaphylaxis include: Individuals who have experienced an allergic reaction to a sting in the past are more likely to have a reaction in the future. They may carry a "bee sting kit" that contains an Epi-pen, an epinephrine shot. This shot relaxes blood vessels and muscles, helping the body to deal with the response while medical help is called. Sometimes a sting can become infected. Consult a doctor if the area affected shows a pus discharge, or if there is an increase in the normal pain, swelling, and redness that was produced by the initial sting. Treatment Most bee stings can be treated without medical attention, but some products may help manage the discomfort. Aspirin or acetaminophen can relieve pain. Sprays or creams that contain anesthetic reduce the risk of infection. Antihistamine creams or oral antihistamines can help control swelling. These products are available online, including oral antihistamines and antihistamine cream. There are a number of different brands to choose from. These are also available over-the-counter OTC from a pharmacy, or they may be prescribed by a doctor. If the local reaction is large, for example, with severe local swelling, oral corticosteroids may be prescribed for 3 to 5 days. Someone who knows they are allergic to stings may carry an epinephrine injector. A bystander can help the person administer this injection, if needed. When a honey bee stings a person, the barbed stinger is not pulled back out from the wound. Stay with the person to watch out for any severe reaction that could develop. Call for urgent medical help if there are signs of an allergic reaction. Remove the stinger promptly if it remains. Honey bee stingers usually stay in the skin, continuing to inject venom. To remove the stinger, wipe over it with a piece of gauze, or scrape a finger nail, piece of card, or a bank card over it. Remain calm and walk away, as wasps and hornets can sting again. They do not usually leave a stinger. Wash the site of the sting with plain soap and water. Apply a cold compress, for example, ice wrapped in a cloth, frozen peas, or a cold cloth to reduce swelling. Squeeze the stinger or use tweezers in an attempt to remove it, as this can cause more venom to be injected. Scratch the sting, as this could aggravate the problem and lead to an infection. Use calamine lotion, vinegar, or bicarbonate of soda. They will not neutralize the venom because it will be deep within the tissues. Burst any blisters that develop, since this can lead to infection. When to call a doctor Call a doctor or ambulance at once if a person has signs of wheezing, swelling, or other symptoms of anaphylaxis, or if you know the person is likely to experience an allergic reaction. See a doctor also if an insect sting leads to blistering, if you are concerned about swelling, if signs of infection develop, such as pus, or if symptoms do not go away within a few days. Prevention Some practical steps can reduce the risk of being stung by a bee. One researcher decided to investigate how different sting locations around the body compared on a rating scale for pain. He selected 25 locations on the body and conducted an experiment on himself to rate the painfulness of a sting at each location caused by a honey bee. He underwent three stings in each location, leaving 5 minutes between each sting for the pain to subside. All stings were rated on a scale from , from low to high pain severity. The eye-watering results, in order of worst pain first, were: A sting on the nostril comes out on top as the most painful location for a bee sting.

## Chapter 3 : Allergic Reaction to Bee Stings: How Not to Die

*If the person stung is having an allergic reaction, call the Emergency Services or your local emergency services. If the victim is having a bad reaction, they may be experiencing anaphylaxis. Call for immediate emergency medical assistance if you notice the following symptoms: [2].*

What should I do now? Sting Facts Getting stung is 1 part pain, 1 part shock, and 8 parts panic. Most people are afraid to go near stinging insects or to allow them to nest nearby because of this. Stings hurt some more briefly than others. Stings swell some quite larger than others. And stings ITCH this is usually the most annoying part of getting stung. Bees, wasps, and ants are part of our natural ecosystem. We need them to pollinate our crops, turn over our soil, and eat the critters that eat our plants. When you see them flying around, they are either: Collecting food to carry back to their nest Looking for a place to build a nest or find a new food site Defending their nest. You will get stung by a bee flying around if you are: Picking flowers, and you grab near the stem where the forager is resting. Wasps and other bees can keep stinging. The photo on the left shows the results of one wasp who got me multiple times on the same hand by the individual you disturbed. Even then, notice that you are only getting stung because the wasp or bee feels trapped. Imagine how you would react if someone sat on you?!? In the third scenario, you will probably walk away with stings. Wasps and bees will vehemently protect their nest. If you had a nest last year, you probably have a nest nearby this year. For ground nesters - watch for a streamline of insects flying into and out of a central spot and avoid that spot. Yellowjackets nest underground or in small cavities in your house. Honey bees will find cavities in old trees or in your house. Paper wasps will nest under eaves of the house. Bees, wasps, and ants use carbon dioxide as a cue that a predator is nearby and they will attack your face. They may not be able to hear you, but they can feel you. If you tromp or mow on the ground nearby, slam the door next to an eave nester, or shake the tree where they are living, they will attack you. If you have disturbed the colony, remain calm. Walk slowly and purposefully away from the nest. Avoid flailing your arms. If you have a swarm after you, run like hell and get inside. They will be looking for something big and moving. Make sure one of you is prepared to call if you begin to have serious symptoms. If you are alone, call someone and tell them you will call them back in an hour if all is fine. Find a quiet place that you can relax. You just got stung, your anxiety is up, and if you have hives, your anxiety is higher. If you suddenly start to feel like you have a scratchy throat, itchy nose, or cough, those are signs you are going into Anaphylaxis. At this point, unless your doctor has recommended another course of action, a shot of epinephrin must be administered. Sometimes right after a good sting, the reaction can look like an ink blot from a Rorschach test. If she really got you, she might draw a little blood and leave a tiny hole in the center of where she stung. If, however, you see pieces of stinger still stuck in there, find a tweezers or forceps and get as much of it out as you can. It might not be a bad idea to disinfect the area if you see this blood spot, as trapped particles may become infected. Here are photos of neck and hand stings. I always get nervous when I "get stung in the jugular" I like to tell that story a lot , because it seems like there should be a direct line to the bloodstream. I have had more allergic reactions when I get stung in my arm than in my neck. Still, it looks sort of bad-ass. This photo was taken about an hour after the sting notice the red dot in the center marks where the actual sting took place. There are, however, creams and medication you can take to help you with the itching. Within about a half hour, the itching and swelling went down a lot. The next day, my arm was still swollen and itchy. I kept using hydrocortizone cream and putting ice on the swelling to deal with the itching. In some cases, the swelling might last a few days. In this one, it only lasted a couple days. This is referred to as a systemic reaction and is one of the first signs of an allergic reaction. If you start to see bumps they sometimes look like mosquito bites in places away from where you were stung, here are a few things to consider. If you are with someone, tell them immediately that you think you are having an allergic reaction to a sting. If you are alone, call someone or call If you have access to Benadryl or other type of allergy medication, take it. You just got stung, your anxiety is up, now you have hives, your anxiety is higher. At this point, unless your doctor has recommended another course of action, a shot of epinephrine must be administered. But, feel free to email me or post your story below after the

emergency has been cleared up. I love to hear a good sting story!

### Chapter 4 : Bee and wasp sting: Symptoms, treatment, and home remedies

*If you or a friend or family member gets stung by a scorpion, don't panic! Most of the time, a scorpion sting is like a bee sting -- pain, burning, mild swelling, and maybe numbness locally, that will resolve fairly quickly.*

What no one expects on vacation is to be bitten by a snake on a hike or stung by a jellyfish while swimming in the ocean. Wearing these shoes could make you a target for snakes. Wear the right shoes Flip-flops are not ideal. Use this feature on your phone to help you. Remember what the snake looks like Try to take a picture of the snake if possible. If possible, take a picture of the snake. This can help with treatment later on, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. Within a minute, the venom spreads. Trying to remove the venom will only cause unnecessary damage and more pain. Why you should always carry a permanent marker Draw a circle around the bite. This can be extremely valuable when doctors are determining how much anti-venom to administer. Also, circle any swelling and note the time. Be prepared for a possible jellyfish sting by keeping this in your beach bag. Keep vinegar in your beach bag Vinegar can help. What you may find in a makeup bag will help with a jellyfish sting. Keep tweezers in your beach bag too Remove any visible tentacles. But only after the infected area has been rinsed with vinegar. Be careful not to scrape the stingers as that can cause more damage. Get to a shower or bathtub immediately. Soak the skin in hot water Use hot, not scalding, water. The water should be between and degrees Fahrenheit, according to the Mayo Clinic. Forget ice Ice might make the sting worse. Ice may make the sting worse, according to Wilcox. Heat has the opposite effect on the sting.

### Chapter 5 : What Should I do if I'm Stung by a Jellyfish? (with pictures)

*Once you have had a reaction to a fire ant sting, you have a 60% chance of having a similar or worse reaction if you are stung again. Ask your doctor if allergy shots would help and if you should.*

According to the Mayo Clinic, people who have gone into anaphylactic shock after one sting are 30 to 60 percent more likely to show the same reaction in the future. If you have a history of anaphylaxis, carry a kit in the event of a wasp sting. Epinephrine relaxes your muscles and blood vessels, helping your heart and respiration rates return to normal. Anaphylactic shock is a medical emergency that requires immediate treatment. Learn more about this dangerous condition, including what to do if someone you know is experiencing it. Treating wasp stings

**Mild to moderate reactions** You can treat mild and moderate reactions to wasp stings at home. While treating your sting at home, you should: Wash the sting area with soap and water to remove as much of the venom as possible. Apply a cold pack to the wound site to reduce swelling and pain. Keep the wound clean and dry to prevent infection. Cover with a bandage if desired. Use hydrocortisone cream or calamine lotion if itching or skin irritation becomes bothersome. Baking soda and colloidal oatmeal are soothing to the skin and can be used in the bath or through medicated skin creams. Over-the-counter pain relievers, such as ibuprofen, can manage pain associated with wasp stings. Antihistamine drugs, including diphenhydramine and chlorpheniramine, can reduce itching as well. Take all medications as directed to avoid potential side effects, such as stomach irritation or drowsiness. First aid differs based on what type of creature has bitten or stung you.

**Severe reactions** Severe allergic reactions to wasp stings require immediate medical attention. If you have an EpiPen, administer it as soon as symptoms begin. If you have a history of wasp allergies, administer the EpiPen as soon as you are stung. Treatment for severe allergic reactions to wasp stings can include: A report published in the *Annals of Tropical Medicine and Public Health* examined unusual cases in which a pediatric patient experienced muscle weakness, pupil dilation, and motor aphasia following a wasp sting. Motor aphasia is the impairment of speech and writing abilities. These particular complications are extreme and highly unlikely to occur. Healthline and our partners may receive a portion of revenues if you make a purchase using a link above.

**Chapter 6 : Bee sting - Diagnosis and treatment - Mayo Clinic**

*Learn what to do if your child is bitten or stung by a mosquito, bee, or other insect and when to call the doctor. Anaphylactic shock in babies Find out what's most likely to cause a severe allergic reaction in your baby and what you should do if she seems to be going in.*

Matt in Oklahoma A few years ago i was trimming the hedge and ran my hand across a nest of yellow jackets and was stung 6 times at the base of my thumb. My hand quickly swelled up like a cartoon. I didnt go into spelling is probably wrong anaphalatic shock but did go into shock slowly while the kids transported me. BP spiked, cold sweat etc. Great article, great advice!!! Good for your kids, and you for training them. Ive never seen anyone who had a severe reaction to Bee stings personally. Looked down and there the lil bugger was quickly flicked him off! I wonder with Bee stings if the effects of the stinger staying inbedded the Bee dies stinging you, the stinger is barbed and the Bee disembowels itself leaving the stinger and poison sack pumping through the the stinger. I recall seeing a extreme close up of this action which also showed the muscles attached to the stinger continuing to enbed it self deeper, OUCH, So If one is stinged one must quickly remove this mess as quickly as possible to reduce the toxin injection. Taking a knife or flat sided object tweezers might work and scrapping across where the sting is field expediency may reduce the effects. But haste in treatment is important! EpiPen and medical attention ASAP if any symptoms occur! Only two stings, and neither a bee? How have you managed to avoid them? Actually, my downfall was going barefoot as a kid. I, also, accidentally stirred up a hive while I was visiting an old house. Tammy My favorite Rx for a bee sting local reaction is household ammonia and then Calagel. For more severe reactions, diphenhydramine. I keep a bottle of liquid Benadryl in my hive tool kit. I am a second year honeybee keeper and more often than not the honey bees are mellow, but I wear the veil and depending upon the season full gear. So far very few stings and just small local reactions but I plan on asking for a prescription for epinephrine, as a bit of insurance. By far the worst sting I have ever gotten was not from a honeybee but from a white faced hornet. Yellow jacket and other wasps are quite tenacious and I am very cautious of them. I have been a nurse at a summer camp for many seasons and I have noticed over the years that bee stings can often lead to local secondary infections, so beware. Tammy, thanks for the reminder about the secondary infections. Be sure to clean the sting area well. Is it widely available? Oops, typo, it is Calagel <http://> As far, as I know no one is allergic to bee stings. Elizabeth Pearson One noteâ€”some people like me are severely allergic to albuterol, so I really disagree with your advice on using albuterol. It is good if you are already prescribed it, but otherwise, using any asthma inhaler not specifically prescribed to you can be dangerous, and sometimes deadly. And I would only use it if it was life or death and other medical help was not an option. What happened when you used albuterol? In that case there is another type of inhaler with different medicine that is less likely to do that. The Secret Goddess My mother taught me this trick: Take the seasoning packet from Top Ramen and rub it right on the bee sting â€” I did this for one of my kids once and it immediately took the pain and swelling away.

**Chapter 7 : What to Do When Your Kitty or Puppy Gets a Bee Sting**

*9 Things You Should Do If You're Bitten by a Snake or Stung by a Jellyfish on Vacation What no one expects on vacation is to be bitten by a snake on a hike or stung by a jellyfish while.*

I am in so much pain that its almost debilitating. I am out of my mind in pain and using ice on the affected areas does give a bit of relief. Last year, I was stung pretty badly on about 90 percent of my right leg by a box jellyfish. It took almost a week for all the raised areas and cuts to subside. But, like clockwork, on the seventh day mark it all flared back up again. The wounds looked fresh, my skin re-bubbled, and it itched terribly. I used anti-allergy meds and kept the area cool. I believed overheating the area was what caused the flare up. Anyway, after another week the redness went away and has since never come back. The only residual pain I suffered after that was occasional "pangs" of pain that would be quick and sharp periodically in my leg. This stopped after about two months. He had small bumps all over his leg, but they soon went away. Does anyone know if this is normal or should I be calling the doctor? Babalaas Post 3 GlassAxe- I would like to add another word of caution. Never use fresh water to rinse a jellyfish sting. It can make the pain worse, increase the severity of the sting, and possibly send the victim into shock. I made the mistake of dumping bottled water on a mild jellyfish sting and it instantly became worse, and the burning stinging pain lasted for a few days. It felt like someone was brushing my ankle with nettle leaves I asked a surfing buddy why my sting was so bad, and he said it was because of the fresh water. He said jellyfish live in seawater, so dumping fresh water on any pieces of tentacle on my leg would have sent the jellyfish nerves in the tentacles into attack mode. Jellyfish would often show up at certain times of the year, so on these occasions I now wear a wet suit for jellyfish sting protection. GlassAxe Post 2 The treatment for jellyfish stings often depends on the type of jellyfish. Vinegar is the best remedy for Box jellyfish; like the deadly ones found in Australia, the non-deadly Hawaiian Variety, and the mauve colored Pelagia Noctiluca found throughout the Mediterranean. Vinegar will make the sting worse in stings from the Portuguese man-of-war which actually is not a jellyfish, but a colony of siphonophores because it will cause unfired nematocysts to fire before it neutralizes the toxins. The venom from jellyfish and Portuguese man-of-war are proteins, so acids, bases, and heat will neutralize the venom. Since acids and bases will cause the nematocysts to fire in man-of-wars, it is best to apply heat to the area once you have removed the tentacles from the skin. Heat will also help to neutralize the toxins in all other types of Jellyfish stings. We were living in Asia at the time and other American friends had a daughter who had been severely scarred by a major jellyfish sting. Shortly thereafter we moved to a location near the sea and our kids would play on the beach frequently. We made it a point to keep a bottle of vinegar handy. It came in handy a number of times and yes, it really works.

### Chapter 8 : What should I do if I get stung by a scorpion? | First Aid For Animal Encounters - Sharecare

*While treating your sting at home, you should: Nearly everyone has been bitten or stung by an insect, spider, or snake. Learn how to treat mild reactions and when to seek emergency medical care.*

You may be experiencing anaphylactic shock , a life-threatening allergic reaction. If a honeybee stings you, remove the stinger immediately with the edge of your fingernail or the edge of a credit card. This helps curb the amount of toxins released into your skin. Wash the sting site with soap and water. Icing the sting site is the most effective way to reduce venom absorption. It also can help reduce swelling. These home remedies may help relieve bee sting symptoms: Honey Honey may help with wound healing, pain, and itching. To treat bee stings with honey, apply a small amount to the affected area. Cover with a loose bandage and leave on for up to an hour. Baking soda A paste made of baking soda and water can help neutralize bee venom to reduce pain, itching, and swelling. Apply a thick layer of baking soda paste to the affected area. Cover the paste with a bandage. Leave on for at least 15 minutes and re-apply as needed. Apple cider vinegar Vinegar may also help neutralize bee venom. Soak the sting site in a basin of apple cider vinegar for at least 15 minutes. You can also soak a bandage or cloth in the vinegar and then apply it to the sting site. Some people claim that alkaline toothpaste neutralizes acidic honeybee venom. Either way, toothpaste is an inexpensive and easy home remedy to try. Simply dab a bit on the affected area. Meat tenderizer An enzyme in meat tenderizer called papain is also believed to help break down the protein that causes pain and itching. To treat a bee sting this way, make a solution of one-part meat tenderizer and four-parts water. Apply to the sting site for up to 30 minutes. Wet aspirin tablet A popular home remedy for reducing the pain and swelling of a bee sting is to apply a wet aspirin or aspirin paste to the sting site. Herbs and oils These herbs have wound-healing properties and may help relieve symptoms of a bee sting: Aloe vera is known for soothing the skin and relieving pain. If you have an aloe vera plant, break off a leaf and squeeze the gel directly onto the affected area. Calendula cream is an antiseptic used to heal minor wounds and ease skin irritation. Apply the cream directly to the sting site and cover with a bandage. Lavender essential oil has anti-inflammatory abilities and can help relieve swelling. Dilute the essential oil with a carrier oil, such a coconut or olive oil. Dab a few drops of the mixture onto the sting site. Tea tree oil is a natural antiseptic and may ease bee sting pain. Mix with a carrier oil and apply a drop to the sting site. Witch hazel is a tried-and-true herbal remedy for insect bites and bee stings. It can help reduce inflammation, pain, and itching. Apply witch hazel directly to the bee sting as needed. Traditional treatments for bee stings Bee stings are traditionally treated with ice or cold compresses to help reduce pain and swelling. Anti-inflammatories such as Motrin or Advil may also help. You can treat itching and redness with hydrocortisone cream or calamine lotion. If itching and swelling are severe, taking an oral antihistamine such as Benadryl may bring relief. Scratching can intensify itching, swelling, and redness. If you experience any symptoms of a serious allergic reaction, such as difficulty breathing, hives, or dizziness, call your local emergency services. If you used your EpiPen in response to the sting, you should see your doctor. If a bee stings you, try to remain calm. Stay away from uncovered garbage cans. Healthline and our partners may receive a portion of revenues if you make a purchase using a link above.

### Chapter 9 : Insect Bite Or Sting - What You Need to Know

*Many types of scorpions roam the landscape in Arizona. Scorpions don't bite (because they have no teeth), but they do sting. If you remain calm, it is not difficult to treat a scorpion sting. Even if you are stung by the Arizona bark scorpion—found mainly in the Southwest and the only scorpion.*

I love the spring — the flowers are blooming, the weather is getting warmer, and I get to enjoy spending more time outdoors. Of course, spending more time outdoors can carry risks. All kidding aside, bee stings can actually pose a serious health threat. If someone is allergic to bees, a sting can be a life-threatening situation. In the vast majority of cases, though, bee or wasp stings are not a cause for concern—they usually just cause some pain, swelling, redness and itching at the site of the sting. Dealing with a bee or wasp sting will obviously be different depending on your sensitivity. You can get it out with your fingers, tweezers or even the edge of a credit card. Remove it as quickly as you can in order to limit the amount of venom released. Next, wash the affected area with soap and water. If the affected area gets itchy—a fairly common side effect—you can apply hydrocortisone cream or calamine lotion to get some relief. The pain and discomfort should go away in a few hours. With a more moderate reaction, swelling around the site of the sting may persist for a few days and even grow larger. There are also alternative home remedies that you can find recommended on the Internet like meat tenderizer and toothpaste. What I can say is that ice and anti-inflammatory medication are what most people need to get better. In rare instances, people who are severely allergic to bee stings can go into anaphylactic shock, a potentially fatal allergic reaction. Signs that you may be having a serious allergic reaction to a bee or wasp sting include wheezing, swelling of throat and tongue, rash or hives, nausea, vomiting and dizziness. If you are experiencing these symptoms you should call or seek immediate medical attention at the nearest emergency room. People who have had anaphylactic reactions to bee stings need to get an EpiPen and carry it with them in case they are stung again. Users inject a pre-loaded amount of epinephrine with the device, which provides a fast-acting method for reducing symptoms of anaphylaxis. After using the EpiPen, people should still go to the emergency room as they may need further medical care and observation. Now that I have contributed to adding bee stings to your list of phobias, let me emphasize that only a very small percentage of the population is allergic to bee stings and a sting is rarely fatal. Healthy Outlook is written by the professional staff of Contra Costa Health Services, the county health department. Send questions to series coordinator Dr. David Pepper at [theairdoctor@gmail.com](mailto:theairdoctor@gmail.com). For more health information, go to [www.healthyoutlook.com](http://www.healthyoutlook.com).