



The Leeds
Teaching Hospitals
NHS Trust

Insect bites and stings

Information for patients

This leaflet will provide you with some information about insect bites and stings.

What to expect

A small inflammation or allergic reaction is common, most bites or stings will not become infected and will not require antibiotics. Skin redness and itching may last up to 10 days.

What can I do to help?

- Oral antihistamines in all people over 1 year old can be helpful to relieve itching. Some may also cause sedation, which may help at night. Be aware that if they do cause drowsiness, you should avoid driving.
- Other treatments available over the counter include Eurax® cream.
- Avoid scratching to reduce inflammation and the risk of introducing infection.

What to look out for?

- If the surrounding skin becomes increasingly red, warm and painful, this may be infected. If you feel well in yourself then contact your GP, as you may need antibiotics.
- If symptoms worsen rapidly, or if you feel severely unwell or feverish then please return to A&E.
- Please seek medical assistance if you develop an unusual 'bulls-eye' rash after a tick bite.



Source www.nhs.uk/conditions/lyme-disease/

What to do if it happens again?

- Scrape off any stingers left in the skin
- Follow the advice on self-care mentioned above
- Call an ambulance if there are any signs of a severe allergic reaction:
 - Itchy blotchy rash across other parts of the body.
 - General redness across the skin.
 - Fast heart rate or low blood pressure, which can cause you to feel faint.
 - Swelling of the face, lips, tongue or throat.
 - Wheezing or difficulty breathing, due to throat swelling or an asthma attack.

Useful websites and reading

- **NHS Website**

Your complete guide to conditions, symptoms and treatments, including what to do and when to get help.

https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/insect-bites-and-stings/Tick_awareness_A5_leaflet.pdf

- **Anaphylaxis UK**

A useful website with factsheets available to download.

www.anaphylaxis.org.uk/living-with-serious-allergies/factsheets/

What did you think of your care? Visit bit.ly/nhsleedsfft
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