

2024-06-10 TBT Bees and Wasps Safety

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Almost everyone has experienced some type of bee or wasp sting in their life. Stings from these insects do not pose a major issue for most people. However, for others, there can be a severe allergic reaction that is life-threatening. Even if you have not experienced a severe allergic reaction to stings before, it is possible to have a severe reaction at any point in your life. It is important to avoid bees and wasps as well as to be able to recognize when someone is suffering from a severe allergic reaction from an insect sting.

Bee and Insect Sting Facts

According to NIOSH, thousands of people are stung by insects each year, and as many as 90–100 people in the United States die as a result of **allergic reactions**. This number may be underreported as deaths may be mistakenly diagnosed as heart attacks or sunstrokes or may be attributed to other causes. Most individuals only experience minor swelling and pain after being stung, but many individuals can experience other symptoms after a sting. Insect stings can result in any of the following symptoms:

- Pain
- Redness
- Swelling (in the area of sting and sometimes beyond)
- Flushing
- Hives
- Itching
- Anaphylaxis

Secondary Dangers of Bees and Wasps

Outside of getting stung, there are other problems these insects can cause. Many people panic if there are any bees around them. This causes incidents to occur. For example, a bee enters a window of a **vehicle**. The driver does not pay attention to the road, crosses the centerline, and runs head-on into another vehicle. Another example is an individual working at heights on a ladder. He begins to hammer on the side of a house, disturbing a bee's nest. After the first sting, he panics, which causes him to fall off the ladder.

It is important to consider the secondary hazards these insects can create.

Sting Prevention

Before performing any work in an area, it is important to do a site walk to look for any hazards, including bees and wasps. Oftentimes, people start performing a task not knowing there is an active hive in close proximity to them. Avoiding areas where bees or wasps are, is the most effective way to

prevent stings. If you are severely allergic to bees or wasps, avoid any work that puts you at great risk of getting stung. Wear clothing that covers as much skin as possible when working in areas where there may be bees and wasps. It is harder for stinging insects to sting through clothing.

If Stung

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