



Bees, Yellow Jackets, Hornets, Mosquitoes and Wasps – Summer’s Here!

July 20, 2015 – San Francisco, CA – Welcome to summer...surf and sand, swimming pools, picnics, camping, outdoor sports and stinging insects! Bees, wasps, yellow jackets, mosquitoes and hornets can take the fun out of summer, and almost everyone has been bitten by one of these pesky creatures. For two million Americans, however, stinging insects can be deadly because of allergies to the venom. California Poison Control System (CPCS) (<http://www.calpoison.org>) reminds residents that there are ways to stay safe and avoid stings (#BeeSafe).

- Stay clear of wild or commercial hives. Commercial hives are located in white boxes and are often clustered in fields.
- If you see a swarm of bees, take shelter in the house or in the water.
- Hollow trees and rock crevices can be home for stinging insects so stay clear of them.
- Cover food at picnics or outdoor meals at home as it attracts yellow jackets.
- Avoid old or abandoned buildings and vehicles.
- Do not use heavily scented soaps or perfumes.

“Many adults and children use insect repellent containing alcohol to ward off bites. Be aware that these contain alcohol, and if you’re near a barbecue or fire pit, the alcohol could catch fire and lead to a severe burn,” says Dr. Cyrus Rangan, Assistant Medical Director for CPCS. He added that for people allergic to bee stings, it’s critical that they carry an auto injector of epinephrine commonly called an Epi Pen. “A severe reaction to a sting may result in abdominal cramps, nausea and vomiting, swelling of the face, lips or throat, breathing problems, hives and even anaphylactic shock,” Dr. Rangan said. “It’s a life threatening emergency, so call 911 and get to the emergency room immediately.”

Dr. Rangan says for simple bites, remove the stinger using a flat object like a credit card, use an ice pack to reduce swelling and calamine lotion or a mix of baking soda and water to stop the itching. “Some people have success applying meat tenderizer or mud to the bite to take away the sting and itching,” he added.

About CPCS

Follow CPCS on Facebook at <http://on.fb.me/iS6S7J> and on Twitter @poisoninfo. Sign up for free weekly safety text messages texting TIPS or PUNTOS for Spanish to 69866; and download a free app at [Choose Your Poison](#). In case of an accidental poisoning, consumers should immediately call 1-800-222-1222. Poison information experts are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to help. In most cases, a poison exposure can be safely managed in your home, avoiding a call to 911 or a visit to a crowded hospital emergency room.

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