

ACCESSING SAFETY KNOWLEDGE (ASK) SHEET: *PEST CONTROL – INSECTS*

The hot Texas weather not only brings about fun in the sun but also all the things that come with being outdoors, including creepy crawlers and insects. Insects are prevalent in our area and are out and about just like we are in the warm weather. This means we are bound to encounter them as we conclude the summer months with various outdoor activities. Whether it be a camping trip or some simple yard work, there are a few things to be aware of as we await the cooler weather.



- > To protect yourself from biting and stinging insects, wear long pants, socks, and long-sleeved shirts, if possible.
- > Use insect repellents that contain DEET or Picaridin.
- > Treat bites and stings with over-the-counter products that relieve pain and prevent infection.
- > Non-drowsy, non-prescription antihistamines and analgesics may be used temporarily in accordance with instructions to help relieve itchiness, pain and swelling.

Fire Ants

- Avoid fire ants – their bites are painful and cause blisters.
- If fire ants do get on you, sweep off ants to prevent them from attaching to skin with their jaws. Check for ants under clothing.
- Keep bites sites clean; pustules are a sign of infection that may need to be evaluated and treated.
- Severe reactions to fire ant bites (chest pain, nausea, sweating, loss of breath, serious swelling or slurred speech) require immediate medical attention.

Bees, Wasps and Hornets

- Bees, wasps and hornets are other insects to avoid – they can inflict mild to severe stings that may require medical evaluation.
- They usually build nests in and around building corners and crevices. Take extreme care should you choose to remove these nests without the help of a professional and try to keep as much distance between you and the nest.
- If you get stung by a bee, wasp or hornet, immediately remove the stinger by flicking it off or wiping gauze over it; do not squeeze or use tweezers – this could push more venom into the sting. Wash the site with soap and water. Apply ice to reduce swelling.
- Contact medical professionals immediately should you show to have an allergic reaction to any sting.

Spiders

- Spiders are usually not aggressive and only bite when provoked. That said, some can be venomous and pose a threat to humans.
- If you are bitten by a venomous spider, a medical professional may administer anti-venom or other treatment.
- Healing may take longer than other insect bites and may leave scar tissue.
- To care for a bite, clean the area with soap and water, do not attempt to remove the venom. Apply an ice pack. Elevate bitten extremities to reduce inflammation and swelling.

Scorpions

- Scorpions usually hide during the day and are active at night.
- Their sting causes an intense, localized aching pain and burning sensation. Absorption of significant amounts of toxin results in vomiting and profuse sweating – untreated, patients may experience an acute hypertensive crisis or even death.
- Should you be stung by a scorpion, remain calm and relaxed. Seek immediate medical care. Apply ice to the sting site; do not submerge in ice water. Medical consultation is recommended because of potential symptom severity.

Provided by the ASA – Houston Chapter Safety Committee