



# MID-JERSEY PEDIATRICS

[www.midjerseypeds.com](http://www.midjerseypeds.com)

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## INSECT BITES AND STINGS

With the onset of warm weather, it is important to recognize, treat and prevent insect bites and stings. Bites are caused by the insects mouth parts biting the skin and drawing blood. Stings are caused by the insect's stinger penetrating the skin and injecting a toxin into the skin.

### ***Insect Bites:***

Mosquito bites are common, especially after wet, warm weather. These bites can produce: itchiness, a central dot in the swelling, and bites on areas not covered by clothing. The bites appear as red bumps and range in size from a dot to a 1/2 inch or more in diameter. Bites near the eye may result in swelling of the lid. Fleas and bed bugs cannot fly, they often crawl under clothing to nibble, they may appear similar to mosquito bites but are usually smaller. Flea bites may blister in young children.

### **Home Care:**

Apply 1% hydrocortisone cream two to three times a day. Aveeno anti-itch cream, Calamine lotion or baking soda may also be applied to the area of the bite. For children over the age of 2 years, you may try Benadryl by mouth to relieve the symptoms. Keep your child's fingernails short and clean, and discourage scratching which may lead to infection.

### **Prevention:**

Some individuals are more susceptible to bites than others. A good insect repellent, such as Skintastic, can be applied before your child goes outdoors. Avoid bee hives, ant nests, and other known insect habitats. Minimizing the area of skin exposed is also helpful.

### ***Wasp and Bee Stings:***

A sting can cause an immediate painful red swelling. Because a sting involves the inoculation of a substance from the insect, allergic reactions may occur. Local swelling and itching are the most common reactions. Rarely, allergic symptoms may include hives, shortness of breath, wheezing, difficulty breathing, and difficulty swallowing. These symptoms may demand urgent medical attention. Bees may leave a stinger; wasps do not.

### **Home Care:**

If you have a little black dot in the bite, the stinger may still present. Remove it by scraping it off. If the sting is painful, rub the area of the bite with a cotton ball soaked in meat tenderizer solution. A melting ice cube may also provide relief. This will neutralize the venom and relieve the pain. If meat tenderizer is not available, apply a melting ice cube. Individuals with known allergies should ask their doctor about the advisability of having a sting kit on hand.

### **Call The Office If:**

1. The child looks ill.
2. There is wheezing, or if breathing or swallowing are difficult.
3. There is severe eye swelling or if the bites appear to be infected.