

Langebaan Country Estate

ALLERGIC REACTIONS AND TREATMENT OF BITES, STINGS & POISON

DATED - 15 April 2009



Excerpt from
Noodhulp vir die Suid-Afrikaanse Huis, Werkplek en Buitelewe, Vlakke 1 - 3
by Linda Buys

Translated and compiled by Leána Hefer, cell 082 721 6588



1. Allergic reactions to bites, stings and poison

Allergic reactions to certain kinds of food, medication, snake or insect bite can lead to respiratory failure and ultimately death.

Signs and symptoms

- Rosy appearance and palpitations
- Pins and needles sensation throughout the body, pulsating feeling in ears
- Itchy red skin with rash that resembles mosquito bites
- Patient coughs and sneezes
- Swelling of throat
- Anaphylactic / allergic shock can set in within 2 - 3 minutes
- Convulsions and unconsciousness

Treatment

- Call a paramedic or someone who is thoroughly familiar with first aid
- Patients who are in possession of an EpiPen auto-injector should use it immediately. Help and keep patient calm
- Keep patient in a position in which it is easiest to breathe
- Transport to hospital immediately or stay with patient until Emergency Medical Service (EMS) arrives. If patient becomes unconscious, turn into recovery position and keep warm. When breathing becomes ineffective, start rescue breathing. Start CPR as soon as signs of circulation cease
- Do not waste time by trying different kinds of treatments, especially if you are not trained in first aid

2. Bee and wasp stings

Can be fatal if patient is allergic or when multiple stings occur. Allergic reactions can become progressively worse when an allergic person has been stung. If the person is allergic, call EMS or transport to hospital immediately.

Allergic reaction

- If the person is allergic and in possession of an EpiPen auto-injector, it should be used immediately. Help if necessary
- Call EMS or transport to hospital immediately
- Respiratory failure may follow. Keep airway patent and give emergency breaths when necessary. Start CPR as soon as is necessary

Treatment

- Remove sting with finger nail or blunt knife, taking great care in not pressing on poison sack
- Reduce swelling with ice pack or make a paste of bicarbonate of soda and water and apply to area
- Anti-histamine ointment can be applied if very painful



3. Scorpion stings

Only 5% of scorpion stings will lead to more than just localized pain. Scorpions with thick tails and small pincers, belonging to the Buthidae family, are extremely poisonous.

Signs and symptoms of allergic reaction

- Immediate excruciating pain in the sting area; no or minimal swelling
- Sagging eye lids
- Problems with speech
- Inordinate saliva excretion
- Respiratory failure

Treatment

- Immediately transport to hospital
- Respiratory failure may follow. Keep airway patent and give emergency breaths when necessary. Start CPR as soon as is necessary

4. Spider Bites

Spider bites are classified according to two kinds of poison.

a. Neuro-toxic poison - the button spider

Burning sensation with pain in bite area, swelling of lymph nodes, prominent pain in some of the major muscles, perspiration and stomach ache.

Treatment

- Transport to hospital immediately

b. Sito-toxic poison - the sack spider, violin spider or six eyed crab spider

Prominent bite mark with formation of blisters, skin tissue dies around bite area

Treatment

- Transport to hospital immediately

5. Human or animal bites

Can cause tetanus. Human bites always lead to very serious infection. A tetanus prophylactic injection must be given in bites by animals or humans.

Treatment

- Wash area with warm salt solution. Cover with dry sterile gauze
- Transport to hospital or doctor.
- Keep patient calm and warm. Do not give anything to drink.
- Monitor breathing. If respiratory failure occurs, give emergency breaths. Start CPR as soon as is necessary.

MEDICATION SHOULD ONLY EVER BE GIVEN BY AN EMS OR DOCTOR