

BUG AND TICK BITES

Spring and Summer bring warmer weather, but also insect bites. We are here to help your family navigate bug and tick bites and answer some of the most common questions:

How do I prevent my child from getting bug bites?

Bug bites are so common in the warm weather months. Prevention is the key! The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends the use of bug sprays that contain D.E.E.T. for children 6 months and older. Infants 4 months and older can use bug sprays in high-risk situations (hiking in the woods, camping, etc.). The reason we recommend D.E.E.T. is it is the only substance that studies show works effectively in prevention of bug bites.

You can spray bug repellent on your child's clothing, head, arms and legs. For younger children, we recommend keeping it off the hands and around the mouth to prevent ingestion. Make sure to bathe your child at night if bug repellent has been applied.

Apply bug spray at the prime bug times: when the sun is rising or setting and when you are camping or hiking in the woods.

What kind of reactions can I expect if my child gets bitten?

Kids' reactions to bug bites can vary tremendously based on the bug, length of exposure and sensitivity. There is a normal range of minor to more significant reactions. Mild reactions include itching and a small bump with surrounding redness. More significant reactions include large bumps (nodules), tenderness, warmth, blistering and surrounding redness or hives. These are all normal inflammatory reactions!

What is the treatment for bug bites?

Depending on the reaction, you can use ice, OTC hydrocortisone cream or calamine lotion. For hives or more severe reactions, parents can use Benadryl. Benadryl dosing is on our website. Please, remember that Benadryl has the tendency to make kids tired.

What is the treatment for bee or wasp stings?

The treatment is similar to bug bites. Right after the sting, using meat tenderizer or baking soda pastes on the sting can help neutralize the reaction. If it is a bee sting, it is important to use tweezers to remove the stinger from the skin, if present. With the exception of anaphylactic reactions (difficulty breathing, throat swelling, etc.), stings are not an emergency!

How do you manage a tick bite?

The first step in tick bites is prevention! We recommend using D.E.E.T. as discussed above. If hiking in the woods, consider having your children wear a hat or long sleeve shirts and pants. Performing “tick checks” nightly when your kids are outside can detect the presence of a tick. Comb your hands through your child’s hair, along the scalp and look at any exposed area of skin.

If a tick is imbedded in your child’s skin, use tweezers and grab as much of the body of the tick as possible. Quickly pull directly up with the tweezers to remove the tick. Often times a small piece of skin will be removed with the tick (this is okay!).

When do we worry about tick bites and when does your child need treatment?

We get concerned about ticks that have been imbedded in the skin for more than 48 hours or if a child develops a bullseye rash. In these very rare circumstances, your child may need antibiotic treatment, either for prevention or treatment. Remember, even in these circumstances, it is not an emergency. If you are concerned your child may need antibiotic treatment, please call the office during business hours to schedule an appointment.