

700 Children's Drive  
Columbus, Ohio 43205-2696  
nationwidechildrens.org

## ALLERGY TO STINGING INSECTS

Children who are allergic to the venom (poison) in bee stings and other insects should be **very careful** not to get stung. The most common stinging insects found in the Ohio area are: honeybees, wasps, yellow jackets, and hornets.

### WHERE INSECT NESTS ARE USUALLY FOUND

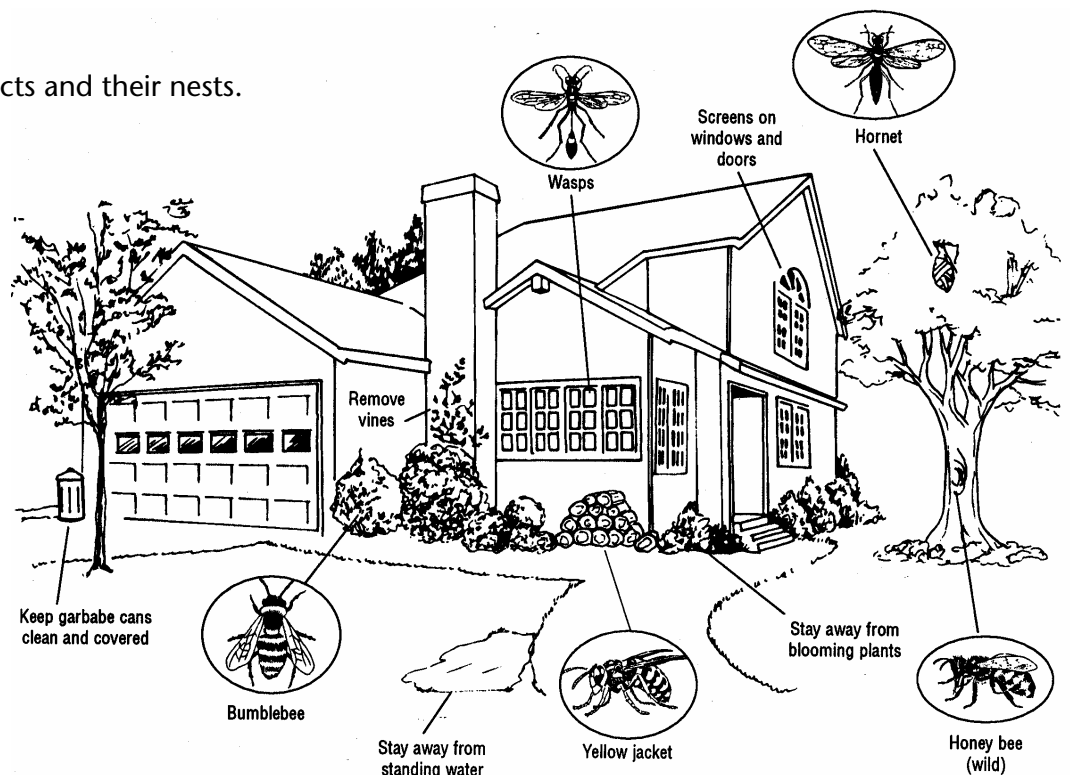
Teach your child to avoid stinging insects and their nests (Picture 1).

- Yellow jackets – in the ground and under logs
- Honeybees – in trees and around plants
- Hornets – in papery nests in trees
- Wasps – in mud nests under house eaves or window sills

### CARE OF THE HOME AND AREA AROUND IT

- Remove vines from the outside of the house that may hide nests.
- Make sure windows and doors have screens.
- Do not stack firewood near the house.
- Keep garbage cans covered and very clean.
- Have an **exterminator** destroy any nests around the home.
- Cover any open ends of swing set posts, clothes lines, or other posts.

Picture 1 Stinging insects and their nests.



## THINGS THAT ATTRACT BEES

When playing outside, children should avoid things that attract bees. These include:

- Perfume
- Hair spray
- Hair tonic
- Suntan lotion (with strong odor)
- Cosmetics
- Bright-colored clothing
- Flowery prints on clothes
- Black fabrics
- Dandelions
- Flowering shrubs or plants
- Orchards with trees in bloom or ripe fruit
- Picnic areas, outdoor meals
- Pet foods
- Sweet drinks and food such as soda pop

## TYPES OF ALLERGIC REACTIONS

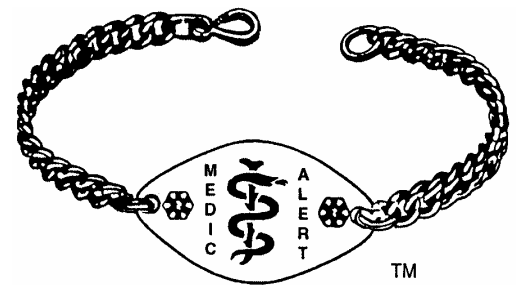
Reactions to stinging insects may be *local* or *systemic*.

- **Local reactions** to bee stings are not usually life-threatening, but may include mild discomfort, redness, and swelling.
- **Systemic reactions** are the most severe type of reactions and may be life-threatening. A systemic reaction usually begins with symptoms of a local reaction. Then within 15 minutes after being stung, symptoms get worse. They include hives, trouble breathing, shock, and in extreme cases, even death.

## SYMPTOMS OF A LOCAL REACTION

If your child has a local reaction to a stinging insect, he may have these symptoms:

- Swelling and redness at the sting site
- Pain
- Itching at the sting site



**Picture 2** A child who has had a systemic reaction should wear a Medic Alert ID.

## TREATING A LOCAL REACTION

- If your child is stung by a bee, you will see the stinger (tiny black object). To remove the stinger, flick the stinger with your fingernail from the opposite direction that it went in. Do not pinch the stinger with tweezers because this will squeeze more venom into the skin.
- Raise the sting site above the level of the child's heart to reduce swelling.
- Place cold compresses (cold wet washcloths or towels) on the sting site.
- Take any oral antihistamine medicine as prescribed by your doctor.
- Put calamine lotion (or a paste made of meat tenderizer and water) on the sting site to decrease itching.

## SYMPTOMS OF A SYSTEMIC REACTION

- Hives
- Hoarseness
- Wheezing
- Chest tightness
- Cough
- Vomiting
- Trouble swallowing
- Swelling of lips or tongue
- Heavy sweating
- Itchy throat
- Itchy eyes
- Diarrhea

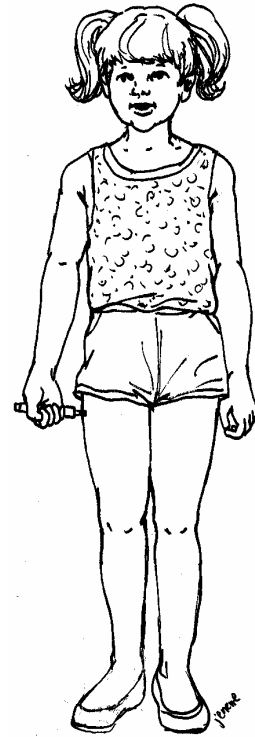
## TREATING A SYSTEMIC REACTION

Doctors often prescribe an automatic injector device such as an EpiPen® that contains a pre-measured dose of adrenaline for children who have systemic reactions. **If you do not have this type of medicine and are having symptoms of systemic reaction, call 9-1-1 and get emergency treatment immediately.**

## USING AN AUTOMATIC INJECTOR (EPIPEN®)

It is important understand these instructions so you will know how to use the automatic injector if needed. (Refer to the Helping Hand, *EpiPen and EpiPen , Jr*, HH-V-122).

1. Pull off the safety cap.
2. Press the black tip of the injector against the outer thigh (Picture 3).
3. Press hard to release the medicine.
4. Hold it in place for 10 seconds.
5. Remove the injector and throw it away.
6. Massage the injection site for 10 seconds.
7. Take your child to the nearest emergency room, or call 9-1-1.



**Picture 3** Using the automatic injector.

## CARE AND STORAGE OF THE INJECTOR

- Throw away the automatic injector in an empty bleach bottle or puncture-proof container such as a detergent bottle.
- Keep the automatic injector out of the reach of small children.
- If the solution in the syringe is discolored (not clear), throw it away and get a new one.
- At home, store it in a dark place at room temperature.
- Check the expiration date on the syringe. Replace it if the date has expired.
- Do not play with the automatic injector or place your finger over the tip.
- In case of accidental injection, go to the nearest emergency room or medical facility.

## SAFETY TIPS

- If your child has had a **systemic** reaction to a stinging insect, he or she should wear a medical ID bracelet or necklace (available at most pharmacies).
- Always have the injector available at school, daycare or baby-sitter, on outdoor trips, or when away from home.
- Always have an extra automatic injector available.
- Your child should never go near a known insect hive or nest.
- Your child should always wear shoes or sneakers (not sandals) when outdoors, except when on a hard, sandy beach.
- For school and child care, make sure you complete the required forms to use the injector if needed. Make sure all school personnel know how to use it.

## ALLERGY TESTING

- Contact your child's doctor to discuss allergy testing. Any child who has had a **systemic** reaction to a stinging insect should be tested for allergy to the insect's venom. Allergy shots can often prevent a systemic reaction. Your allergy specialist will decide if these are needed for your child.
- If you need a doctor for your child, call the Children's Hospital referral and Information Line at (614) 722-KIDS.

If you have any questions, be sure to ask your doctor or nurse, or call \_\_\_\_\_.