

INFORMATION FROM YOUR PEDIATRICIAN

Sting allergy? Make sure your child has emergency plan

If your child has ever had an allergic reaction to a sting from a bee, yellow jacket, hornet or wasp, let everyone know what to do if it happens again.

Create a plan using an updated online form from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), www.aap.org/aaep. Perhaps your child's pediatrician created an allergy emergency plan to share with schools, camps and child care. Update it with the new form. It has simple steps that can be customized for sting allergies. You can use it for children with other allergies, too.

Children who are severely allergic should be given epinephrine right away after any sting. This is important even if the child has mild symptoms. After injecting epinephrine, call 911 and ask for an ambulance with epinephrine. You might need to give the child a second dose of epinephrine after five minutes if symptoms get worse, continue or do not get better.

An allergic child might have shortness of breath, wheezing, coughing, pale skin, weak pulse, fainting, tight throat, trouble breathing, swelling of the lips or tongue that affects breathing, hives or confusion.

Nonallergic children might have symptoms that disappear soon after the sting or last a few hours to days. Sometimes, symptoms disappear and return. Swelling can increase for the next 48 hours. The area might be red for up to three days and swollen for up to a week. Mild reactions also include sneezing, an itchy nose and mouth, a few hives or a stomachache.

If a bee stung your child, remove the stinger as soon as possible. The stinger continues to release venom, which causes itching and pain.

To find the stinger, look for a black dot in the center of the sting area. Scrape it out with a credit card or try peeling it off with a piece of sticky tape. If part of the stinger stays under the skin, it's OK to leave it alone, the AAP says.

The AAP suggests rubbing meat tenderizer, an aluminum-based deodorant or a baking soda paste on the sting. This neutralizes the venom and helps with pain and swelling. If the pain continues, use a cold pack or ice cube. Sometimes, over-the-counter steroid cream (e.g., 1% hydrocortisone) and antihistamines (e.g., diphenhydramine) help.

If symptoms do not go away on their own or your child was stung multiple times, check with your child's pediatrician.

