

PoisonSmarts



Rocky Mountain Poison Center's quarterly prevention tips
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Last year Rocky Mountain Poison Center assisted 413 bee, wasp and hornet victims from our five state region (CO, HI, ID, MT and NV) and 123 snakebite victims from all the states except HI, the only state in our region without snakes.

The following tips will help you prevent bites and stings.

- Avoid scented soaps, perfume and hair spray; they attract insects.
- Avoid wearing brightly colored or patterned clothing.
- Wear lightweight, light-colored, long-sleeved shirts and pants.
- If you see insects flying to and from a particular place, avoid it.
- Avoid drinking sugary drinks outdoors; some insects may be attracted to them.
- Keep outdoor dining and camping areas clean and free from garbage.
- If a bee or wasp lands on your skin, remain calm and gently and slowly brush it away with a piece of paper.
- Avoid going barefoot in grass containing clover and blooming ground covers.

If you are stung take the following actions.

- Remove stinger immediately (most likely from a honey bee).
- Wash with soap and water.
- Remove jewelry near the bite site because swelling may occur.
- Apply a cool compress to the area.
- Check with your physician about tetanus update if it's been greater than 10 years.
- **If the victim develops trouble breathing, call 911 immediately.**

If a poisonous snakebite is suspected, do the following.

- Remain calm and reassure the victim.
- Arrange for immediate, rapid and safe transport to medical care.
- If bit on an arm or leg, immobilize with a sling on the arm or splint the leg.
- Have the victim lie flat with the affected area positioned at or below heart level.
- Avoid "cutting and sucking", tourniquets and ice packs; all can cause more injury.
- A clean, cool compress can be applied to the site after a gentle wash with soap and water.
- Call the Rocky Mountain Poison Center at **1-800-222-1222** anytime night or day.

Follow these tips to prevent snakebite.

- When hiking, wear at least ankle high shoes or boots.
- Avoid blindly sticking your hands or feet into woodpiles, deep grass or crevices.
- Stay far away from snakes. They can jump half the length of their body when striking.
- Hike with a buddy. Take a cell phone. Let people know where you will be and check in.

For additional poison prevention tips go to www.rmpdc.org ; Click on Poison Prevention Tips.
To obtain PoisonHelp guides, magnets or stickers, call 1-800-222-1222; choose option 4.
Questions? Contact Mary Hilko at 303-739-1247 or mary.hilko@rmpdc.org.

