



Wasp and Bee Stings on the Rise

Yellow jacket wasps become a nuisance in our area from late summer till the first freeze. If you have been to a picnic, outside restaurant, sporting event, state fair, or any outdoor event you have most likely come across these wasps. At this time of the year they are scavenging for food and unfortunately, they are attracted to human food. They are quite beneficial to agriculture since they feed on flies and caterpillars, but what concerns humans is their aggressiveness and ability to sting numerous times.

Some tips to avoid unnecessary stings:

- Never swing, strike or run away rapidly from a yellow jacket. Quick movements can provoke the wasp to sting.
- If you're eating outdoors, keep your food covered especially fruit and soft drinks.
- Refuse containers should have tight-fitting lids. Pet bowls should be cleaned after using.
- Pick up fruits as soon as they ripen and pick up any fallen fruit rotting on the ground.
- Avoid wearing perfume, aftershave lotions, scented soaps and shampoos when you will be in areas where bees and wasps congregate.
- Avoid wearing bright, colored flowery prints. Jewelry that is shiny may also attract bees and wasps.

The Nebraska Regional Poison Center offers the following tips for treating insect stings:

- Remove the stinger with a gentle scraping motion using a credit card or fingernail. Do not squeeze or pull the stinger, or you'll release more venom.
- Clean with soap and water.



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- Apply ice compresses for 15-20 minutes at a time.
- Watch for indications of a sudden allergic reaction such as itching, wheezing, faintness, sweating, confusion, hives, or rash. Contact a physician or visit the nearest emergency department at the first sign of these symptoms, which could become life-threatening.
- Delayed reactions may occur 10-14 days after a sting. Contact a physician if the person stung experiences fever, discomfort, hives, headache, or itching.

For more information, call the Nebraska Regional Poison Center at (402) 955-5555 (in the Omaha area) or toll-free at 1-800-222-1222 (in Nebraska and Wyoming).

The Nebraska Regional Poison Center is sponsored by The Nebraska Medical Center and University of Nebraska Medical Center.