






# What's Buzzing?

## How to Identify Insect Sting Allergy

Everyone reacts to insect stings, but when is it a severe allergy? Here's what you need to know.

### Most Common Stinging Insects & Where They Live

<b>HONEYBEES</b>  beehives	<b>WASPS AND HORNETS</b>  bushes, trees and on buildings	<b>YELLOW JACKETS</b>  ground, dirt mounds, old logs and walls	<b>FIRE ANTS</b>  large mounds in open areas	<b>HARVESTER ANTS</b>  soil, moist areas, under wood, rocks, bricks
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Don't approach or disturb the insect nests.

### Types of Reactions to Insect Stings

#### SMALL LOCAL REACTION

- Discomfort
- Pain
- Redness
- Swelling < 2 inches



**Treatment for small local reactions:** Pain medicine, cold compress and ice.

#### LARGE LOCAL REACTION

- Exaggerated redness and swelling
- Gradually enlarges over 2 days
- Swelling is about 5 inches
- Swelling peaks at 48 hours



**Treatment for large local reactions:** Pain medicine, cold compresses and elevation of sting if on extremity, antihistamines for itchiness.

#### SEVERE REACTION (systemic allergic reaction)

- Swelling in face, throat or tongue
- Difficulty breathing
- Dizziness
- Stomach cramps
- Nausea or diarrhea
- Itchiness or hives in large areas



**Treatment for severe or systemic reactions:** Use injectable epinephrine if available. Take antihistamine and **call 911** or go to the emergency department.

### What Attracts Stinging Insects, and How to Reduce Your Chance of Getting Stung



Severe allergic reactions to an insect sting can be life-threatening. **Call 911** if you experience a severe allergic reaction to an insect sting. Ask your doctor if allergy shots can reduce your risk of recurrent severe reactions.