

10 HOME REMEDIES FOR BEE STINGS

How to treat a bee sting



Bee stings can be frightening. Every year, millions of people are stung by bees and other stinging insects. For some people, this is a life-or-death situation. Allergies to bee stings are common, and victims of stings can quickly go into anaphylactic shock and possibly die if not quickly treated. If you have an allergic reaction, seek medical help rather than attempting to resolve the issue at home. For those who are not allergic, bee stings are still painful and inconvenient. Luckily, there are many home remedies that may minimize symptoms and promote healing.

1. Remove the Stinger: Before doing anything else, it is important to remove the stinger from the wound. While some stinging insects can sting multiple times, honey bees die after stinging. If you are stung by a bee, the stinger will typically break off and remain in your skin. Be careful not to squeeze or twist the stinger because it can inject more toxins and cause pain. Instead, use tweezers or your fingernails to gently pull the stinger out. Do not attempt to treat the sting before removing the stinger. If it breaks off under the skin, you should see your physician.

2. Baking Soda: The venom spread by bee stings is very acidic, which is why bee stings are so painful. Applying baking soda can help to neutralize the acidity of the sting and absorb toxins, reducing pain and inflammation. After removing the stinger and cleaning the area, you can apply a baking soda paste to the wound. This typically consists of equal parts water and baking soda blended. Apply a layer of paste to the sting and allow it to dry. You should notice a difference in pain levels quickly. After 20 minutes, rinse the baking soda from the sting site with cold water.

3. Cold Compresses: Whenever swelling and pain is involved, cold compresses are typically an effective remedy. While they will not impact toxins, the underlying cause of pain in bee stings, ice packs are an easily-accessible way to reduce inflammation. They also decrease blood flow to the area, which can help to prevent the toxin from traveling quickly around the body. Before applying ice, you should carefully clean the area with antibacterial soap and warm water. While a sting may seem like a minor break in the skin, it can still become infected if not properly cared for.

4. Calamine Lotion: Carefully cleanse the sting area before applying calamine. Smooth a thin layer onto calamine over the sting site, and cover with a bandage if necessary. If you have severe itching, it may be an allergic reaction, and you should consider seeking medical help.

5. Lavender: Using lavender or lavender oil to treat stings is an effective way to reduce pain and itching. Lavender's soothing properties can reduce inflammation and calm a localized reaction. One drop of lavender essential oil can be applied to the sting, or the leaves of the plant can be pressed against the sting. If you intend to use oils, be cautious and try them on an unbroken part of the skin first to check for any adverse reactions. You want to avoid aggravating the sting site further, so this is a wise step for any new treatment you may try.

6. Witch Hazel: Another natural remedy for bee stings is witch hazel. This cleansing extract contains tannins, along with many other soothing properties. These tannins act as an astringent that makes witch hazel such a potent remedy. Witch hazel can help to prevent infections and also eliminate pain and itching at the site. After removing the stinger and cleaning the area, apply a small amount to the sting site. Cover with a sterile bandage. Alternatively, you can soak a sterile cotton pad in witch hazel and apply it to the area. After the pain and itching subside, you can remove the bandage or pad and rinse the area with cool water.



7. Apple Cider Vinegar: Some people recommend apple cider vinegar to treat bee stings because it has antibacterial and anti-inflammatory properties. However, most other types of vinegar increase the stinging sensation as both the vinegar and the bee stings are acidic. That's why vinegar is best used on hornet or wasp stings. Those insects have an alkaline-based venom, which is neutralized by the acidity. Apple cider vinegar is not as acidic, so it is better for bee stings. Generally, vinegar is considered a better remedy for other insect stings, so it should be a last resort to treat most bee stings.

8. Toothpaste: Toothpaste is another alkaline-based substance, like baking soda, that can help to neutralize bee sting venom. Although the mint may initially sting, it will soothe pain and inflammation and reduce itchiness. First, clean the affected area, then apply a thin layer of toothpaste and cover with a bandage if necessary. This remedy works best if plain white toothpaste is used, especially something that contains baking soda or hydrogen peroxide. That's because these substances can provide anti-bacterial and anti-inflammatory properties, helping your sting to heal. They also contain fewer dyes and other ingredients that can further irritate stings.

9. Mud: One of the most old-fashioned remedies for stings is found in nature: mud. Of course, applying mud to a bee sting goes against everything previously mentioned about cleaning the affected area and avoiding infections. However, bee stings don't always occur at times when a pharmacy or grocery store is nearby. If the sting site is extremely painful, itchy or inflamed, consider applying mud to the site temporarily. If you have purified water, use it to dampen a small amount of dirt and apply to the sting. The coolness will relieve pain and swelling temporarily. However, be sure to thoroughly disinfect the area as soon as possible.

10. Antihistamines: Bee stings can cause itching in all patients, not just those with severe allergies. If you have a localized reaction, you may want to take antihistamines to treat your symptoms. Over-the-counter medications will reduce redness, swelling, and itching. These drugs are usually inexpensive and can also be purchased as a topical cream to be applied to the affected area. While there are plenty of more natural choices, antihistamines work quickly and effectively, which is helpful for reducing suffering.

However, if you have difficulty breathing or swallowing after a bee sting, you need immediate medical care for your allergic reaction and should not resort to self-treatment.

Source: *Facty Health*