

YCPARMIA

Spider Bites

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Most spiders found in the United States are harmless, with the exception of the black widow and the brown recluse spiders (sometimes called the violin spider). Both of these spiders are found in warm climates.

The brown recluse spider:

The brown recluse spider, or violin spider, is about 1 inch long and has a violin shaped mark on its upper back. It is often found in warm, dry climates and prefers to stay in undisturbed areas such as basements, closets, and attics. It is not an aggressive spider, but will attack if trapped or held against the skin. One death -- in December, 2001 -- has been reported in the United States from a brown recluse bite.



Venom from the brown recluse spider usually causes local tissue damage. The following are the most common symptoms of a bite from a brown recluse spider bite. However, each individual may experience symptoms differently. Symptoms may include:

- burning, pain, itching, or redness at the site which is usually delayed and may develop within several hours or days of the bite
- a deep blue or purple area around the bite, surrounded by a whitish ring and large red outer ring similar to a "bulls eye"
- an ulcer or blister that turns black
- headache, body aches
- rash
- fever
- nausea or vomiting

These symptoms of a brown recluse spider bite may resemble other conditions or medical problems. Always consult your physician for a diagnosis.

Treatment for a brown recluse spider bite:

Specific treatment for a brown recluse spider bite will be determined by your physician. Treatment may include:

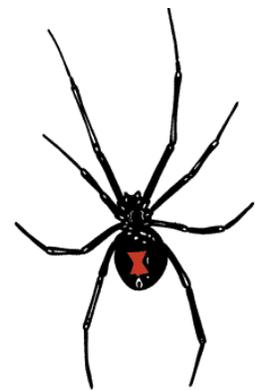
- Wash the area well with soap and water.
- Apply a cold or ice pack wrapped in a cloth, or a cold, wet washcloth to the site.
- To protect against infection, particularly in children, apply an antibiotic lotion or cream.
- Give acetaminophen for pain.
- Elevate the site if the bite occurred on an arm or leg (to help prevent swelling).
- Seek immediate emergency care for further treatment. Depending on the severity of the bite, treatment can range from administering corticosteroids and other medications to surgery of the ulcerated area. Hospitalization may be needed.
- Prompt treatment is essential to avoid more serious complications, especially in children.

The black widow spider:

A black widow spider is a small, shiny, black, button-shaped spider with a red hour-glass mark on its abdomen, and prefers warm climates. Black widow spider bites release a toxin that can cause damage to the nervous system, thus emergency medical treatment is necessary.

These are the most common symptoms of a black widow spider bite. However, each individual may experience symptoms differently. Symptoms may include:

- immediate pain, burning, swelling, and redness at the site (double fang marks may be seen)
- cramping pain and muscle rigidity in the stomach, chest, shoulders, and back
- headache
- dizziness
- rash and itching
- restlessness and anxiety
- sweating
- eyelid swelling
- nausea or vomiting
- salivation, tearing of the eyes
- weakness, tremors, or paralysis, especially in the legs



These symptoms of a black widow spider bite may resemble other conditions or medical problems. Always consult your physician for a diagnosis.

Treatment for a black widow spider bite:

Specific treatment for a black widow spider bite will be determined by your physician. Treatment may include:

- Wash the area well with soap and water.
- Apply a cold or ice pack wrapped in a cloth, or a cold, wet washcloth to the site.
- To protect against infection, particularly in children, apply an antibiotic lotion or cream.
- Give acetaminophen for pain.
- Seek immediate emergency care for further treatment. Depending on the severity of the bite, treatment may include muscle relaxants, pain relievers and other medications, and supportive care. Antivenin may be needed, although it is usually not required. Hospitalization may be needed.
- Prompt treatment is essential to avoid more serious complications, especially in children.