



Wolfe Island Community Medical Clinic

PO Box 89, Wolfe Island, ON, K0H 2Y0

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Allergic Reaction to Insect Stings

All year round, everyone should be aware of possible allergic reactions to medications, latex, foods and other substances. During the summer, we must also be aware of possible allergic reactions to insect stings. The information provided below is based upon information on the website of the Canadian Allergy, Asthma and Immunology Foundation.

BE AWARE: It has been estimated that the risk of severe allergic reaction to such things as insect stings and certain foods, is in the range of 1% to 2% in the general population. See an allergist for a proper diagnosis. Find out exactly what to avoid.

AVOID CONTACT: If you or a family member has a diagnosed food allergy, you probably know all the things you must do to avoid contact with food triggers. If you are allergic to latex or medications, tell medical personnel every time (including your dentist). During summer, when insects are a concern, do regular property inspection and remove any insect nests. Store garbage in well covered containers. Take care when consuming sugar containing beverages outdoors, especially where it is difficult to see the contents of a bottle or other container to ensure that a stinging insect has not entered the container.

TAKE ACTION:

- If you know you are susceptible to a severe allergic reaction to insect stings, medications, latex, or certain foods or substances you should discuss with your doctor the advisability of carrying an auto-injector device such as the EpiPen.
- Honeybees leave its stinger in the skin and this must be removed immediately following the sting. Avoid any squeezing of the sac as this will force more venom through the stinger and into the skin. Hornets, wasps and yellow jackets do not leave the stinger in the skin and can simply be brushed off the skin following the sting.
- **If you suspect that you or another person is showing signs of a severe allergic reaction CALL 911 for the Paramedic Service!**



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It is recommended that epinephrine be administered as early as possible after the onset of symptoms of severe allergic reaction. The Paramedic Service on the Island is equipped with epinephrine and has the personnel available to administer it, as well as to monitor the individual for signs of a severe allergic reaction. **It is therefore strongly suggested that the Paramedics on the Island be contacted as early as possible if allergic reaction to an insect sting or other allergen is suspected.** Epinephrine is usually effective after one injection; however, further treatments may be required. The Paramedic Service will be able to observe the patient during transport to the hospital and have epinephrine available in case further injections are required. **If you decide to go to hospital in a private vehicle you should be aware there is a very strong possibility of progression of symptoms.**

Itching in and of itself without the presence of at least one other symptom generally does not indicate a severe allergic reaction. Individuals with the need for epinephrine will not always have predictable reactions nor will adequate warning signs necessarily appear before serious reactions occur. Look for a **combination of any of the following** which can occur up to four hours after exposure:

Common Symptoms and Signs of Allergic Reactions

Hives, rashes, swelling	Diarrhea/Stomach cramps
Itching (of any part of the body)	Tingling in mouth
Swelling (of any body parts)	Change of voice
Red watery eyes	Coughing/Wheezing
Runny nose	Throat tightness or closing
Nausea/Vomiting	Difficulty swallowing
Changes in skin colour	Fainting/loss of consciousness
Cold Clammy Skin	Dizziness/lightheadedness
Fear, Panic, Sense of doom	Difficulty breathing