

Insect Bite Treatment

Vancouver's summer is filled with sunshine, coupled with beautiful scenery, it is the best time to go out and enjoy nature. Contact with nature will inevitably increase the chance of insect bites. The best is; of course, take precautionary measures before going out, such

as spray mosquito repellent, wear long-sleeved clothes and trousers to prevent mosquito bites. However, sometimes despite the best preventive measures, insect bite is hard to prevent.



Pay attention to skin reactions after an insect bite. Bites by poisonous spiders and wasps may lead to life-threatening allergic reactions, symptoms may include: body erythema, itching and swelling, difficulty breathing. If these conditions occur, one needs to go to emergency room immediately or call 911 for help. If you already know or suspect you will experience such lethal allergic reaction after insect bite, you should carry with you an Epipen® injection whenever you're out in the nature. Epipen can be purchased in a pharmacy with or without prescription. When stung by an insect, inject yourself with Epipen according to package instruction. The purpose of Epipen is to allow the victim to have more time to look for emergency department for help.

For majority of the insect bites, skin reactions are mostly localized, Bitten sites develop redness, swelling, and itchiness and can be treated with hydrocortisone 0.5% cream (non-prescription) two to three times day. Hydrocortisone is a kind of corticosteroid which is anti-inflammatory, can reduce swelling and has antipruritic effect. Avoid apply too much and too long of a duration because it can make the skin thinner. If the anti-itch effect of hydrocortisone 0.5% cream is not fast enough, other agents with anesthetic ingredients (such as Lanacane®) can be added. Just keep in mind the effects of these anesthetic cream last only one to three hours. If a bitten site develops pus, it will need to be cleaned and then coated with antibiotic ointment (can be combined with anti-inflammatory creams).

If after using the above non-prescription agents for one week and the bitten sites still have not improved or actually deteriorate then one need to visit the family doctor for medical advice.