



How to Avoid Stinging Insects

Honeybees, Wasps, Yellow Jackets & Hornets

Stinging insects do not seek sustenance from humans, as do biting insects, such as mosquitoes, flies and fleas. The sting of these insects is only used against people for self-defense or defense of the nest.

Honeybees

These bees travel in a straight line from flower to hive, and stings usually occur when someone interrupts a bee in flight, or strikes a flower in which a bee is working.

Honeybees are attracted by flower fragrances, bright colors and smooth-water surfaces. Fragrant perfumes, colognes and powders also attract honeybees. The fragrance of some house paints has been known to act as an excitant to honeybees and cause them to behave aggressively. For safety, clothing should be light in color. Hair should be short or tied up during the warm months to avoid entanglements that cause stings.

If a person is stung and cannot identify the insect, see if the stinger is embedded in the sting site. If it is, chances are the sting was from a honeybee.

Wasps, Yellow Jackets & Hornets

Wasps feed on the larvae of other insects, which they kill with repeated stings. The stinger is not embedded in the sting site.

The adult wasp lives on juices, sap and nectar; it is attracted by odors such as spoiling foods, soft drinks, fruit juices, leather, perspiration, bright colors and a water supply.

Yellow jackets make their nests in the ground, and paper hornets' nests may be close to the ground or high above it. Both of these stinging insects are particularly hazardous to bare feet and ankles.

General Rules for Avoidance & Removal

- The first rule when a stinging insect approaches is to **STAY STILL**. Remember, people who keep bees professionally wear protective clothing and **ALWAYS MOVE SLOWLY**.
- Be careful when you shake out clothing that has been left on the ground. Wasps or other stinging insects could be in the folds of the clothing.
- Avoid orchards in bloom, clover fields, and any areas that are abundant with flowers. Don't wear dark clothing, and don't wear perfume or hair sprays.
- Do not mow lawns, trim hedges or prune trees during seasons in which honeybees and wasps are plentiful.
- Collisions cause stings, so avoid running, riding horses, bicycles or motorcycles. A convertible automobile with the top down is especially hazardous.
- Keep a "bee cloth" (even in an enclosed car) to trap frightened insects before they sting, or keep an insecticide spray in the glove compartment of your car.
- Caution children about not throwing stones or sticks at insect nests.
- Inspect property in the early spring and make periodic inspections all summer until hard frost to make sure that no nests or hives have been started. (Allergic individuals should not participate in these inspections.)

- Use the skills of an exterminator or the local fire department to remove hornet nests. Beekeepers will often be glad to come to your property and relocate a bee colony.
- Locate yellow jacket nests during the day and demolish them at night when the insects have returned home.
- At least two applications of gasoline, kerosene or lye are needed in the hole where yellow jackets have nested. The fumes do the job, so do not light the gas or kerosene. Wear protective clothing and call an exterminator if you are uncertain about how to proceed.
- Wasps' nests can be knocked down with a broom handle after spraying the nest with an insecticide.

Protect Against Shock

Hypersensitive individuals should obtain a prescription for self-administered Epinephrine (EpiPen or Auvi-Q) against anaphylactic shock for use when medical treatment cannot be immediately secured.

Please ask your Allergist for a prescription and make sure to have the kit with you at all times.

Medical alert tags or bracelets ensure prompt and proper treatment in case consciousness is lost.

If you have questions about how to avoid stinging insects, feel free to contact our office at 614-760-0099. One of our staff would be happy to answer your questions about allergies to stinging insects and different treatment options offered at Allergy & Asthma Clinics of Ohio.