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# PARENT HEALTH BULLETIN

MAY 2012

## THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: BUG AWARENESS

**T**his has been a mild winter in Kentucky. There will likely be a lot of bugs this summer. It is important to talk to your child about bugs and how to avoid ones that bite and sting. This can help everyone to enjoy the longer days of summer.

Look around your home. Do you see any bug nests, webs or areas that you should warn your child to avoid? Sometimes the bugs that are around the house can harm our family. We should be aware of what they are and ways to avoid them.

**Why do bugs bite or sting?**

Many bugs attack when they are threatened. Some insects like bees, hornets, wasps and spiders commonly do this. They may also attack when they are trying to protect their nest, territory or web. If you see an area that has the potential to be a home to one of these insects, take steps to either eliminate the problem area or your child's exposure to the area.

**Does it hurt when a bug bites or stings?**

Most of the time, bug bites and stings hurt for a short time. And for most children, there are no



long term reactions to a bite or sting. If your child is bit by a mosquito, the most common reaction is an itching feeling. Bites or stings from spiders and scorpions may require a trip to the doctor. If your child tells you it hurts, listen and take steps to reduce the sore spot.

**Continued on the back** ➔

## *Talk to your child about bugs and how to avoid ones that bite and sting.*

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#### **What should you do if your child gets a bite or sting?**

Encourage your child to tell you if he or she is bitten or stung. Sometimes when children are playing, they may not notice a bite or sting right away.

- For mosquito bites: Tell your child not to scratch it. Scratching can increase the chance for infection and more bleeding.
- For bee stings: You may need to help your child get the stinger out of his or her skin. Once it is out, wash the area well with soap and water. If possible apply ice to reduce swelling. Use pain reliever or anti-itch medication if you feel it is necessary.
- If your child has a tick, hopefully he or she will not try to remove it. You will want

***Remind children to not swat bugs. Swatting may make them more likely to attack.***

to remove it and, if possible, keep the tick in a plastic bag to take to the doctor if needed. To remove a tick, use tweezers and pull it off in one swift motion. If your child has a tick, you should let your doctor know. DO NOT use petroleum jelly or a hot match to kill and remove a tick.

#### **Preventing bites and stings?**

- Keep the family away from bees or wasp nests.
- Keep sweet drinks and foods covered if you are eating outside — they often attract bugs.
- Remind children to not swat bugs. Swatting may make them more likely to attack.
- Make sure to check your child's body if you have been in the woods or tall grasses. Have someone check for ticks on you as well.



- Keep the family away from places that spiders and scorpions make their homes, such as in woodpiles and dark spaces. Even better you should remove these areas from your child's play areas.

It is very important that children get to play outside. It is also very important that they avoid bites and stings that could be prevented. Talk to your child about bugs and how to best avoid getting bitten or stung.

#### **REFERENCES:**

- KidsHealth from Nemours. "What to do when you are bugged by bugs." Sept 2010. [http://kidshealth.org/kid/ill\\_injure/aches/bug\\_bites.html?tracking=K\\_RelatedArticle#](http://kidshealth.org/kid/ill_injure/aches/bug_bites.html?tracking=K_RelatedArticle#)

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