

# Venomous Arthropods

## Wasps, Hornets and Bees

Envenomation due to stings by these insects is a common problem in Sri Lanka. Their stinging apparatus (stinger) is situated in the abdomen connected to venom glands.

Small children, elderly patients with cardiac diseases, asthma and allergy are affected more by these stings.

Multiple insect stings may lead to death.

### Wasp / Hornet (Debara)



### Honey bee (Meemassa)



### Giant honey bee (Bambara)



### Clinical Features

- Itching of bitten part
- Red patches
- Swelling
- Vomiting
- Abdominal pain

They can get anaphylactic type reaction leading to laryngeal spasms, breathing difficulty, low blood pressure and death.

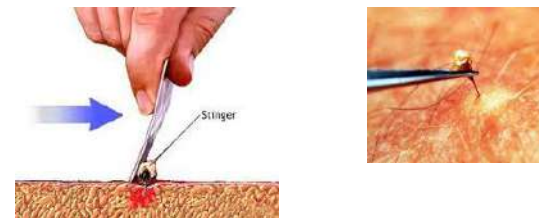


## Precautions to minimize Bee/Wasp /Hornet sting

- In areas where they are abundant avoid carrying, eating or drinking of sugary drinks or sugar containing food items
- Discard remaining fruits and other wastes collected in the area immediately.
- Wear clothes to cover whole body, wear shoes and hats and do not wear bright coloured clothes which attract insects.
- Avoid applying fragrant.
- Avoid disturbing their habitats by throwing stones or causing damage.

### First Aid

- Reassure to relieve anxiety
- Remove the stings if present. Can use a forcep or hard cardboard without squeezing the affected part
- Wash the affected area with soap and water.
- Remove rings, bangles, anklets, cords or tight clothes.
- Keep ice on the affected area to relieve pain
- Give paracetamol for pain
- If faintishness, breathing difficulties occur take the patient to hospital as soon as possible.



### Scorpion

Scorpions hide in holes, ant hills and inside the bark of the trees during day time. They become active at night. **Black scorpion** species are common in Sri Lanka and their bites cause severe pain, swelling, itching of affected area with mild allergic reaction



Black scorpion

### Red scorpion

Red scorpion is not endemic in Sri Lanka, It is found mainly in the Jaffna -peninsula Palali, Achchuweli and Karainagar from where bites are documented. The red scorpion bite can be fatal and few deaths were reported.



Red scorpion

### Clinical features

- Rapid heart rate
- Fluctuation of blood pressure
- Excessive sweating
- Excessive salivation
- Shock
- Cardiac arrest
- Death

If bitten by a red scorpion seek immediate medical treatment.

### To avoid scorpion bites

- Do not keep shoes socks and boots outside the house where scorpions can easily hide.
- Be vigilant before wearing or using towels, cloths, socks and shoes which are kept out side.
- wear gloves while working in the garden
- Wear shoes and carry a torch when going out in the night
- Keep the house and surrounding area clean.

National Poisons Information Centre  
National Hospital of Sri Lanka  
Colombo

## Spiders

The hairy spiders *Poecilotheria fasciata* are considered as venomous spider found in Sri Lanka. This spider is called Divi Makuluwa in Sinhala and Nachchu Silandhi in Tamil. They are found in holes of coconut, palmira and other trees.

### Tarantula

#### *Poecilotheria fasciata*



Spider envenoming with severe complications are not common in Sri Lanka.

#### Clinical features

- Local Pain
- Swelling of bitten part
- Exhaustion
- Muscle spasms
- Labored breathing

#### First Aid

- Keep ice on the bitten site
- Relieve pain with paracetamol

## Centipedes

Centipedes live inside caves or among leaves. They are mainly active in the night.

- Bites are extremely painful and cause swelling of bitten part
- Bites are not deadly venomous



#### Clinical features

- Local pain and swelling
- Muscle spasms
- Local bleeding
- Some may get vomiting, sweating and enlargement of regional lymph nodes.

#### First Aid

- Keep ice on the affected part
- Keep ice on the bitten site
- Relieve pain with paracetamol
- Seek immediate medical treatment specially persons with allergic history

#### Preventive measures

- Keep the home and surrounding environment clean.
- Clean pillows, mattresses, clothes etc.

### Reach us on;



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