

Sea Animal Envenomation



National Poisons Information Centre
National Hospital of Sri Lanka
Colombo

Jelly fish -Lodiya



Jellyfish stings are not seasonal but seem to occur throughout the year. They have nearly see-through bodies with long tentacles. Stinging cells inside the tentacles can hurt people when contact with them.

Stings can cause mild skin irritation to severe symptoms, redness of skin, swelling, headache, salivation, rapid respiration, increasing heart rate, abdominal discomfort, faintishness, joint pain and paralysis.

Sea Urchin -Ikiri



The sea urchin is a spiny, hard-shelled creature that lives on the rocky seafloor, usually found in shallow water around Unawatuna, Hikkaduwa and Beruwala etc.

Their long sharp spines inflict a painful wound if they penetrate human skin. Multiple deep punctures can cause fatigue,

weakness, muscle aches, shock and paralysis. Shortness of breath and death also may occur. Spines may break when they go through muscles, in which case need to cut open the area to remove the spines.

Porcupine fish



These fish are medium to large in size found in shallow sea water. The body is covered with sharp spines. These spines are visible even prior to “puffing up”. These spines inflict a painful wound and swelling. Also some of their internal organs having a potent neurotoxin that inhibit neural transmission; which can cause paralysis and death.

“Never eat their flesh”

Scorpion fish - Ginimaha



Scorpion fish live in shorelines of the coastal area. Fins are look like feathers and consist with poisonous spines. Their stings can cause intense pain and swelling at the site of prick.

Sea snakes

Sea snakes are spending their entire life in the sea including coastal estuaries, brackish lagoons and bay. They are usually not aggressive unless provoked.

Yellow-belly sea snake - Walakkadiya



A pelagic sea snake usually found in deep water off shore. Feeds on fish found near the surface. Aggressive and highly venomous. Colour varies from black to brown and upper belly light brown to yellow.

Beaked or Hook-nosed Sea Snake



A large highly venomous sea snake found in the brackish waters of lagoons, estuaries and bays. Caught in fishing nets encountered by fishermen in lagoons. Snakes are aggressive and bites when handled.

Viperine Sea Snake



Is confined to the coasts of northern Sri Lanka where it is found 5-10 km offshore. Highly venomous, bites aggressive when caught in fishing nets.

The common symptoms are muscle pain, inability to move (Paralysis of legs) joint aches, blurred vision, difficulty in swallowing, excessive salivation and drooping of eye lids.

First Aids

- Reassure the patient.
- Immobilize the bitten part.
- Apply ice packs for relieve pain
- Give paracetamol to pain relief.
- Remove adherent tentacles or spines using a tweezer. If a spine is embedded in the chest, neck or stomach, take the person immediately to the hospital without attempting to remove them.
- Do not apply Methyl alcohol/Ethyl alcohols or sea sand on the bitten site
- If there is scratching, blistering or any other allergic symptoms after sea bath seek immediate medical advice.

Prevention

- Careful sea bathing in the areas where jelly fish are densely populated.
- Wear protective clothes, shoes when swimming or diving in areas where jellyfish or urchin stings are possible.
- Never eat unidentified sea fish.

Reach us on;



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