

Insect Bites and Stings

It is the time of year when **midges** are looking for likely victims and wasps can be found buzzing around the garden table **spoiling** the enjoyment of eating outside.

Aside from the fact that insects are a **nuisance**, they also pose a potential **threat** to those of us who are allergic to bee sting and wasp sting. Depending on which part of the country one lives, the problem of **horseflies** and even mosquitoes should not be **underestimated**. Although insect **repellent** does help, this author experienced the limits of repellent when she was bitten by a wasp looking for wood for nest-building! **Allergy sufferers** should be especially careful because of the risk of anaphylactic shock, which is an over-reaction of the immune system.

Pharmacy customer: Hello, do you speak English?

PTA: Hello. Yes, I do. How may I help you?

I was just sitting outside the ice cream parlour when a wasp attacked me.

Oh, that doesn't look good. When did it happen?

About ten minutes ago. It's very painful and it's starting to swell up and get red, as you can see.

Well the first thing we need to do is to disinfect the site of the sting. Is it okay if I use this disinfectant wipe?

Yes, please do.

Then we need to cool the site. We have pre-frozen gel packs in our deep freeze for such eventualities. I'll just go and get one for you.

Thank you. Oh that really helps.

Do you have any other symptoms aside from the obvious ones?

Symptoms? What kinds of symptoms?

Do you have a headache?

No, I don't.

What about **nausea**?

No, I can't say that I feel nauseous.

That's good. If you do start to feel any of these symptoms, or circulation problems, **stomach cramps**

and **vomiting**, please, seek medical help **immediately**.

That sounds very dramatic. Why should I do that?

You see they might be the symptoms of an anaphylactic shock. And that's a medical emergency.

Good to know! I think I might also need antihistamines. Do you have any that are not prescription medicines?

That was exactly what I was going to recommend next! Yes, we have these **pharmacy-only** antihistamines. You will need to take them for a few days, until the irritation stops. I would also recommend using a hydrocortisone cream. **Applied locally** it usually helps **alleviate** the swelling and the itchiness.

Is there anything else that I should be careful of?

Well, when I go out in the summer, especially in the evenings, I always wear insect repellent.

What about eating garlic, or taking vitamin B1? Aren't they supposed to help?

Sorry, but there is no scientific evidence that they will repel insects. And garlic will only repel your family and friends?

Okay, thank you for your help. Goodbye.

You are welcome, bye, bye. ■

*Catherine Croghan,
Lecturer in English and native speaker*



VOCABULARY

midges	Mücken
likely victims	mögliche Opfer
spoiling	ruinieren, beeinträchtigen
nuisance	Störung, Belästigung
threat	Drohung, Bedrohung
horseflies	Bremse, Pferdebremse
underestimated	unterschätzt
allergy sufferers	Allergiker
ice cream parlour	Eisdiele
painful	schmerzhaft
obvious	offensichtlich
nausea	Übelkeit, Unwohlsein
stomach cramps	Magenkrämpfe
vomiting	Erbrechen, sich übergeben
immediately	sofort
prescription medicines	Rezeptpflichtige Arzneimittel
pharmacy-only	apothekenpflichtig
applied locally	lokal aufgetragen
garlic	Knoblauch