

Stinging Insect Identifier



Honey Bee



Honey Bee Hive



Wasp



Wasp Nest



Yellow Jacket



Yellow Jacket Nest



.5-5%
of Americans
at risk

Approx.
9.5 million
allergic
Americans

40-100
fatalities/yr.!

**You don't have to be afraid.
Instead, Bee Aware.**

Talk to an allergist near you
about Venom Immunotherapy.

To learn more about the Bee Aware program,
and to find an allergist near you, visit

www.BeeAwareAllergy.org

Bee  **Aware**™

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Bee  **Aware**™

Patient Information

Venom Immunotherapy (VIT)



You can reduce your risk of systemic reaction to insect stings.

Approximately 9.5 million Americans are at risk for a potentially life threatening systemic reaction to an insect sting.^{1,2,3} Those who go through this experience know it can be quite traumatic.

An allergic reaction is an “overreaction” by your body to a substance that is normally harmless. A systemic reaction, which is a severe allergic reaction, may include:

- Swelling of the throat or tongue
- Hives
- Gastrointestinal symptoms
- Difficulty breathing
- Dizziness
- Unconsciousness
- Cardiac arrest



After suffering a life threatening systemic reaction, you may feel frightened, helpless or anxious about the possibility of experiencing another insect sting, leading to a similar or more serious reaction. By evaluating the different options available and deciding what is right for you, you will be able to live a normal life, free from fear of the outdoors. Contact a local allergist to learn how you can take control of your allergies.

Your allergist will likely suggest that you are tested to see which stinging insect(s) you are allergic to. Depending on the severity of your allergies, Venom Immunotherapy (VIT) might be the ideal treatment for you.

What is Venom Immunotherapy (VIT)?

VIT is a series of injections that introduce minute amounts of venom into your body. The amount is gradually increased over time to help your immune system build a tolerance to the venom proteins. This process is continued until your body has enough immunity to be able to tolerate a sting without your body “overreacting.”

How effective is VIT?

VIT has been found to be 95 to 97% effective in reducing the risk of systemic reaction in stinging insect allergic patients.^{2,4}

How long does VIT take?

The build-up phase, during which the amount of venom protein is gradually increased, generally ranges from three to six months. The frequency of injections during the build-up phase is usually once or twice a week. The maintenance phase begins when an effective therapeutic dosage is reached, at which time injections are given less frequently (every two to four weeks). Your allergist will discuss the necessary duration and frequency of injections with you in greater detail.

While undergoing VIT, your allergist will also provide you with a prescription for an epinephrine auto-injector. If you do experience an insect sting prior to building up immunity to the venom, epinephrine can counteract the symptoms of a severe allergic reaction by constricting the blood vessels and opening the airways. Oftentimes a second dose of epinephrine is needed within 10-15 minutes, so it’s important that you also seek medical treatment immediately.

There are risks involved with VIT. Most can be easily treated by your allergist and their staff. Be sure to discuss all possible risks with your allergist before deciding on the right treatment for you.

How to Avoid Stinging Insects

It is impossible, not to mention undesirable, to avoid going outdoors, but there are certain precautions that can be taken that will allow you to enjoy the outdoors while minimizing your chances of being stung.

It is important to remember that stinging insects do not seek out humans. The sting of these insects is only used against people for self-defense or in defense of their nest. This is why it is important to never approach or provoke an insect of this kind unnecessarily.

- If a stinging insect approaches, remain calm and stay still.
- Never slap or brush off an insect of this kind, as they are more likely to sting when frightened by these quick movements.
- Avoid orchards in bloom, clover fields, and any areas that are abundant with flowers.
- Don’t wear bright clothing or fragrant perfumes or hair products when spending time outdoors.
- Stinging insects are attracted to odors such as soft drinks and fruit juices, so be extra careful if eating or drinking outdoors.
- Yellow Jackets make their nests in the ground and paper hornets’ nests may be close to the ground, so avoid bare feet and ankles when outdoors.
- Caution children about not throwing stones or sticks at insect nests.
- Have a non-allergic individual inspect property for nests in the early spring and periodically throughout the summer until hard frost.
- Contact an exterminator or the local fire department to remove stinging insect nests.

1 Golden BK, Marsh DG, Kagey-Sobotka A, et al. Epidemiology of insect venom hypersensitivity. JAMA. 1989;262:240-244.

2 Valentine MD. Anaphylaxis and stinging insect hypersensitivity. JAMA. 1992;268:2830-2833.

3 U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, Interim State Population Projections, 2005.

4 Valentine MD, Schuberth KC, Kagey-Sobotka A, Graft DF, Kwitrovich KA, Szklo M, et al. The value of immunotherapy with venom in children with allergy to insect stings. N Engl J Med. 1990; 323:1601-3.