



# SPRAIN OR STRAIN

Joint injury by overuse and improper movement; pain, swelling, tenderness and bruising; difficult movement

## CAUSES

### TRAUMA

Sprains refer to the condition wherein a person's ligaments are damaged or torn. On the other hand, strains refer to the condition wherein a person's muscles are damaged or torn. Both are caused by trauma and occur most often in the ankles, knees, and fingers.

### DO:

- Exercise, sports and other physical activity should be stopped immediately once pain is felt.
- Rest the affected body part for one to two days.
- Apply cold compress immediately on the affected area. Do this for 15 to 20 minutes four times a day.
- Bind affected area with a cloth wrap or bandage to secure.
- Elevate body part above the level of the heart when possible.
- If pain is unbearable, over-the-counter pain relievers can help ease pain.
- Cool down after exercising.
- Sprain and strain-proof the household and make sure the people living in the house are safe from accidents.
- If symptoms persist after 48 hours, seek medical advice.

### DON'T:

- Don't over-exercise. Stretch and warm-up properly before getting involved in any strenuous physical activity.

# STING OR BITE

Red lump or patches on the skin that are itchy, swollen and/or painful

Ordinary insect stings (from mosquitoes, ants, etc.) are hardly ever serious. However, bites from some small animals such as arachnids or parasites can be dangerous.

### BEE STING

Ordinarily, bee stings are harmless. The pain and discomfort should last no more than one or two days. However, some people may be allergic to insect venoms. If not properly diagnosed or treated, this can lead to death.

### Symptoms:

- Dizziness, nausea and vomiting
- Stomach cramps accompanied by diarrhea
- Itching or swelling around the eyes and hives breaking out on the face and other parts of the body
- Wheezing, difficulty breathing and eventually, unconsciousness

### DO:

- When a person is suffering from a severe allergic reaction (which happens just a few minutes after person is stung), seek emergency medical help immediately.
- Place a cold compress on the affected area while waiting for the ambulance or on the way to the emergency room
- When stung by a bee, immediately remove the insect from the person's skin by flicking it sideways with a fingernail. Be careful not to pinch or pull the bee as it may induce venom to be injected further in the skin. The victim should leave the area quietly and immediately to avoid being attacked by other bees.
- Take note of the kind of insect that stung the victim to enable an attending physician to diagnose the problem.
- If the person is not allergic to bee stings, a small



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amount of meat tenderizer (any brand with the chemical *papain*) mixed with a few drops of water to make a paste applied on the sting can lessen pain and inflammation.

- If bee stings are common in the area of residence, spray such areas (e.g. garden and backyard) with pesticide. A professional pest exterminator can remove any nests in the area.
- If a bee flies near a person, he or she is advised to raise his/her hands to cover the face especially the eyes. Stand still or slowly move for cover.
- A careful dosage of antihistamines could help abate the problem.
- If insects are common in the area of residence or recreation, a first aid kit specifically put together for persons with severe allergic reactions to insect venom should be within easy reach at all times. This kit should contain one sterile syringe of epinephrine that is ready for injection, four chewable tablets of antihistamine, two sterile alcohol swabs for cleaning the injection site and a tourniquet.

### DON'T:

- Do not remove bee nests without the help of a professional exterminator.
- Do not flood or burn nests as this may only anger the insects and provoke them to attack.
- When spraying a nest with commercially available pesticide, do not stand directly under an overhead nest as this may cause bees to fall and sting even when weakened by the spray.
- If a bee flies into a moving vehicle, do not attempt to strike at the insect. Slowly pull over, open the window slightly and allow it to escape.

### BLACK WIDOW SPIDER BITE

Black widow spiders got their names because their females tend to devour the males after copulating. Considered as the most venomous spider in North America, it has a shiny, jet-black, rounded globular abdomen marked by two reddish or yellowish triangles which form a peculiar hourglass-like shape on its underside.

A black widow spider bite feels just like a pinprick, or sometimes may not even be felt by the victim. Symptoms may be mild at first but the next few hours can be torture as the venom spreads throughout the body.

### Symptoms:

- Severe abdominal cramps
- Muscular pain especially in the soles of the feet
- Swollen eyelids
- Nausea, profuse sweating, tremors, difficulty in breathing, vomiting
- Feeble pulse, cold clammy skin, unconsciousness and even convulsions

### DO:

- Seek emergency help.
- Place a cold compress on the affected area while waiting for the ambulance or on the way to the emergency room.

### DON'T:

- Do not disturb spider webs as this may cause them to attack. Steer clear of any webs you see and if possible, clean out possible nesting grounds such as piles of wood and rocks, or bales of grass and hay.



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#### CHIGGER BITE

Chiggers are the larvae of harvest mites. They feed on areas with low vegetation but attach themselves to animals to get protein. They normally attach themselves to the opening of a hair shaft and inject saliva into the skin rather than burrowing in it. Parts of the body which are more often affected are the areas where skin is thinnest such as the ankles, wrist, thighs, groin or waist. Chiggers stay on a person's skin for one to four days depending on when the feeding is complete. Afterwards, they drop back to the ground to develop into full-grown harvest mites. Some people may experience an allergic reaction when first bitten.

#### Symptoms:

- Red, itchy lesions in the abovementioned areas after having visited a wooded or grassy area

#### DO:

- Try washing the affected areas with dog shampoo and rinse thoroughly.
- The dermatologist can provide ointments to dry up and heal the sores that are present though they cannot prevent new ones from appearing.

#### DON'T:

- Do not scratch the itchy area. Try putting ice on the local area to soothe itching.

#### OTHER CAUSES

Other possible causes may include fire ants, horseflies, mosquitoes, scorpions or ticks.

## STOMACH PAIN

Pain in the stomach

#### GALL BLADDER DISEASE

The gall bladder is one of the body's glands which uses the bile secreted by the liver to digest and absorb fat into our bodies. It is responsible for breaking down certain substances that would otherwise be indigestible.

Gall stones are solid, pebble-like masses which accumulate in the gall bladder. They are one of the most common gall bladder problems that a person may encounter. Generally, if a person has gall stones that are not causing any symptom, a surgical procedure to remove them is not usually recommended by physicians.

When the stones start to let their presence known, surgery is necessary as stones may cause other complications. It is believed to be caused by an unhealthy high-fat, high-cholesterol and low-fiber diet.

#### Symptoms:

- Intense abdominal pain in the area under the ribcage, on the person's right side
- Nausea and vomiting

#### DO:

- Seek medical help if symptoms are felt.
- Avoid fatty foods.