



# Bug Bites

## Spiders and Ticks and Mosquitoes - Oh, My!

Despite Mother Nature's recent attitude, it is summer time! Summer is the perfect time to enjoy a day out in the sun, swimming in the pool or fishing at the lake. However, we humans aren't the only beings enjoying the great summer weather! Along with these warmer temperatures come various types of insects that enjoy "bugging" us. I will briefly go over these annoying animals and inform you what they do, and why.

Beginning with spiders; these creepy crawlers are a fear to many – and for good reason! Nearly all spiders are poisonous (excluding 2 species). However, most of these spiders are unable to penetrate human's skin. Three main species can break through the skin and cause us harm. These spiders are the Hobo Spider, Black Widow, and Brown Recluse. Hobo spiders are the least venomous of the three and tend to stay in their funnel-shaped sheeting waiting for prey. Unfortunately, their traps are sometimes disturbed which causes them to become aggressive and bite anything near them. Even though these bites aren't fatal, they can cause a quite painful and slow-healing wound. Black Widow spiders are easily identified as they have a bright red hourglass shape on their abdomens. These spider bites can be fatal and cause joint stiffness and severe pain. Brown Recluse's are tricky to spot and differentiate from other spiders. This makes them even more dangerous. Their bites are similar to the black widow, except the ulcerated wound at the site of the bite can spread. If you suspect you've been bitten by one of these spiders, seek immediate medical attention!

Next are ticks. These annoying bugs feed on both human and animal blood. When they come into contact with skin, they place their fangs deep into the skin so that they can hold on to the host firmly. It's important to remove ticks within 36 hours to prevent Lyme Disease and Rocky Mountain

Spotted Fever. A thorough search should reveal any hiding ticks. However, some may feed and drop off before you can get to them. This results in a rash that looks similar to a bull's-eye. To remove ticks still feeding, use tweezers to grasp near the tick's head and pull gently until the entire insect is removed. Some other methods exist but don't work as well and may even cause more damage, such as: heating, taping, and painting over the tick.

Lastly are mosquitoes. These pesky creatures are easily found in the warm and humid climates and come out in the morning and at dusk. When they land on a host, they inject their saliva to prevent blood from clotting around the site of the bite. They then continue to feed (unless you kill them!) and fly off to find their next unfortunate victim. If that's not enough reason to dislike these insects, here's another! Mosquitoes transmit more diseases to humans than any other biting insect. A few of these include: Malaria, Yellow Fever, West Nile Virus, and many more!

Realistically, it's going to be difficult to avoid insect bites entirely throughout summer. Repellents such as DEET can be great to keep bugs away, but don't always do a good enough job. To ensure that you are properly taken care of, be sure to see a health care professional to assist you in picking out repellents and proper treatments. Have an awesome summer!

