TREATMENT GUIDELINES FOR HEALTH STAFF

BITES AND STINGS

Authorized health and wellness staff may treat bites and stings as follows:

**For human bites:**

1. Irrigate the open wound with saline solution.
2. Debride the wound as indicated.
3. Assess for possible presence of an imbedded foreign body.
4. Assess the need for surgical closure (steri-strip or sutures).
5. Consider the need for tetanus-diphtheria-acellular pertussis (Tdap) booster immunization if status unknown or last dose given more than 5 years ago.
6. If signs of infection are present or bite wound is on the hand, consider antibiotic treatment with amoxicillin/clavulanate (Augmentin) 875 mg every 12 hours for 5 days **or** doxycycline (Vibramycin) 100 mg twice daily for 5 days (contraindicated if pregnant).
7. Evaluate if human bite is indicative of abuse and/or assault and should be reported to authorities.

**For animal bites:**

1. Irrigate the open wound with saline solution.
2. Debride the wound as necessary and evaluate for surgical closure.
3. Consider the need for the Tdap booster immunization as with human bite.
4. If signs of infection, consider antibiotic treatment as indicated for human bites.
5. Report animal bites to local authorities and manage in consultation with state or local health department.
6. Examine the wound in 48 hours and again at the end of antibiotic treatment (if initiated at onset).

**For insect and arthropod bites and stings:**

1. For generalized urticaria, wheezing, chest or throat tightness, syncope, or dizziness, stabilize airway and give epinephrine (1:1,000, 0.3 ml) subcutaneously, diphenhydramine (Benadryl) 50 mg IM, nebulized albuterol for bronchospasm, and transport to emergency center as soon as possible.
2. Remove the stinger and cleanse the skin with a disinfectant.
3. Administer supportive measures, i.e., cool compresses and elevation of the body part.
4. For mild itching, systemic therapy with antihistamines, e.g., diphenhydramine (Benadryl) 25-50 mg po as a single dose or hydroxyzine (Atarax/Vistaril) 25 mg po as a single dose, may be given.
5. Antibiotics are **not** normally given unless there are obvious signs of bacterial infection. Local erythema and swelling are usually due to the chemical envenomation.

**For snake bites:**

1. Consult and manage in consultation with state or local health department.

### WHEN TO REFER TO THE CENTER PHYSICIAN

* If cat bite, refer to center physician for consideration of antibiotic prophylaxis
* If the wound may require suturing
* For black widow spider or scorpion bite
* If lesions are not improving on antibiotics or there are signs of cellulitis (surrounding erythema, streaking from the lesions, local tenderness) or abscess
* If the wound is not healing **on** antibiotic therapy