

Insect and Tick Allergy Fast Facts



Visit [www.allergy.org.au/patients/
insect-allergy-bites-and-stings](http://www.allergy.org.au/patients/insect-allergy-bites-and-stings)
for free resources about insect and tick allergy.


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australasian society of clinical immunology and allergy

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Fast Facts

Insect and Tick Allergy

- 1** Allergies to stinging insect venoms are the most common cause of severe allergic reactions (anaphylaxis) in Australia. Anaphylaxis to stinging insects (such as bees, wasps or Jack Jumper Ants), result in an average of three deaths per year. Insect bites are a less common cause of anaphylaxis than insect stings.
- 2** Most allergic reactions to insect stings or bites result in mild or moderate symptoms. These include local itch and swellings, that can be large and uncomfortable. However, they usually settle within a few days.
- 3** Ticks also cause allergic reactions, including anaphylaxis. Ticks are mainly located in coastal regions of mid Eastern Australia. To prevent allergic reactions to tick bites it is important to freeze dry ticks before removing them. For more details go to www.allergy.org.au/ticks
- 4** Symptoms of anaphylaxis to venom include an all over rash, swelling of the tongue or throat, trouble breathing, stomach (abdominal) pain, diarrhoea, vomiting, and a drop in blood pressure (shock).
- 5** People at risk of anaphylaxis to venom are usually advised to seek urgent medical help if stung or bitten, and to have their adrenaline (epinephrine) autoinjector/s readily available to treat anaphylaxis. They should also be referred to a clinical immunology/allergy specialist for further tests and treatment.
- 6** Allergy testing using skin or blood tests may be ordered by your doctor to help confirm or exclude insect allergy. This will help to select treatments and measures to treat and prevent allergic reactions to insects.
- 7** Allergen immunotherapy (desensitisation), is an effective treatment for severe allergies to bee and wasp stings. The treatment usually takes three to five years and rebates are available in Australia and New Zealand. Allergen immunotherapy is also available for Jack Jumper Ant (in limited centres), but is not yet available for treating allergic reactions triggered by ticks or other species of ants.
- 8** Referral to a clinical immunology/allergy specialist is recommended to initiate venom immunotherapy. These specialists are listed on the ASCIA website www.allergy.org.au/patients/locate-a-specialist

More information:

www.allergy.org.au/patients/insect-allergy-bites-and-stings

Other Fast Facts: www.allergy.org.au/patients/fast-facts

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