



# bites & stings



**T**he degree of the reaction to a bite, sting or puncture wound is not only determined by the nature of the offending creature or puncture implement but also by the sensitivity of the subject.

In some cases the initial reaction may be painless but severe reactions may follow in the form of pain, swelling, blistering and weeping of fluid, or an irritant dermatitis may develop.

The most important consideration when selecting a remedy is to make a choice based on the presenting symptoms rather than the type of insect or bite. The following remedies are the most commonly prescribed.

**Apis** is indicated when a bite or sting becomes red, shiny, swollen, edematous, with a red rosy hue such as found with bee and wasp stings. The pains are stinging and burning and are worse from heat and better from cold. Many feel that this remedy is specific for bee stings as it is made from the honeybee. It is also known to be useful in the stings of jellyfish and centipedes. The individual may become thirstless, drowsy, confused, and apathetic.

**Belladonna** is useful for bites and stings where there is rapid swelling and violent symptoms. There is redness, heat, throbbing, and burning, or redness spreading out in streaks. The face is flushed, eyes glaring, pupils dilated, the body fevered, and an excited mental state. There may even be delirium where the individual becomes furious, rages, and bites and strikes. It is often used after dog bites with classic **Belladonna** symptoms.

**Cantharis** has sharp, searing pains and the formation of blisters in the region of the bite. Symptoms are better from cold compresses and aggravated by heat.

**Carbo Veg** where a bite is followed by shortness of breath, shock and collapse. The person is cold, clammy and gasping for air after an insect bite.

**Hypericum** suits bites and stings with shooting pains from the site of the bite and often follows after using **Ledum**. It is useful in neuritis, tingling, burning and numbness. It is specific for injuries to places rich in nerves such as the fingers, toes and nails. **Hypericum** can be distinguished from **Ledum** by the fact that it is worse from cold applications.

**Ledum** is for mosquito bites or a reaction to insect and animal bites and stings or puncture wounds where the skin is white or purple, puffy and cold. In the classical homoeopathic literature



it was reputed to prevent tetanus and antidote poisons. It is especially indicated when the part bitten feels cold but the person does not want the part covered or heated in any way and prefers cold applications.

Homoeopathy can be helpful if you are susceptible to mosquito bites. The usual recommendation is to take short courses of **Ledum 6c** as it is understood by homoeopaths to reduce the incidence of and reaction to bites. A weekly dose of **Calc carb 30c** may reduce susceptibility and the allergic response in children who fit the picture. Alternatively just take **Ledum** when likely to be exposed to mosquitoes. As mentioned this especially applies to travelling in tropical climates. You may also want to consider researching the local area before travelling as you may wish to consider suitable nosodes for the local insects and animals.

**Mercurius** should be considered, along with **Apis** after bee stings to the tongue, for example puppies playing in the garden.

**Natrum Mur** can be a good follow up remedy after **Apis** if there are lingering symptoms after a bee sting. It can also be used in insect bites that take on the appearance of hives. Salt water is also said to be an effective external application to bites and stings.

Animal bites and puncture wounds should be very carefully cleaned and the patient treated with **Arnica** and **Ledum**. Repeat the remedies regularly until the area has healed.