



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

## Symptoms

(systemic reaction)

- Hives
- Redness
- Swelling
- Vomiting
- Nausea
- Diarrhea
- Dizziness

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# THE TOILET PAPER

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## BEE STINGS

When bees or wasps sting a person, they inject venom through their stinger into the skin of the victim. Wasps, yellow jackets, and hornets have stingers without barbs that are retracted upon stinging, and they can sting multiple times. About 3% of people stung by bees and wasps have an allergic reaction to the sting, and up to 0.8% of bee sting victims experience the severe and life-threatening allergic reaction known as anaphylaxis. In the normal reaction to a bee sting, the skin is reddened and painful. Swelling and/or itching may also occur. In a **systemic allergic reaction**, the entire body is affected.

In anaphylactic reactions, victims experience wheezing, difficulty breathing, and a drop in blood pressure that leads to shock if not treated promptly. Around 50 people are killed each year in the U.S. due to severe anaphylactic reactions to bee stings.



If you are stung by a bee:

- **Call emergency medical services** if you have a history of severe reactions to insect stings.
- **Determine if the stinger is still present** (look for a small black dot at the sting site) and remove it immediately if it's visible in the wound.
- **Apply ice or cold packs** to the area to reduce the body's inflammatory response.
- **Clean the area with soap and water**, then apply hydrocortisone cream to the site to decrease the severity of the reaction.
- **Take an antihistamine**— benadryl, ibuprofen, or acetaminophen to relieve symptoms.