



Insect Bites and Stings

West Virginia University
Environmental Health and Safety



Precautions:

- Avoid conducting fieldwork during peak biting or stinging insect activity times (usually early morning and evening hours)
- Avoid conducting fieldwork in favorable biting or stinging insect habitat such as wetlands, along streams, lakes, and moist shaded portions of wooded, brush-covered, or grassy areas.
- Avoid contact with insect nests, swarming insects, and ant mounds.
- Advise your field colleagues (and supervisor) in advance if you are allergic to insect bites or stings so they can respond appropriately if you are bitten or stung.
- Wear a long-sleeved shirt and long pants with boots in the field.
- Tuck your pants into your boots or socks helps prevent biting and stinging insect access to your skin.
- Use insect repellants containing compounds such as DEET (repels insects) on exposed skin and permethrin (kills many insects on contact) on clothing only.
- Look for insects or insect activity before placing your hands on objects such as rock outcrops or trees or picking up objects from the ground (i.e., plants, rocks, leaves, remote monitoring equipment, etc.)
- Inspect the area where you intend to sit, particularly around stumps, logs, boulders, or rock outcrops.
- Remove the stingers from skin by using tweezers and then clean and dress sting wounds.
- Never scratch an insect bite or sting.
- Seek professional medical attention if you suspect you are experiencing severe venom allergic reaction symptoms.

