



First aid fact sheet

Spider bites

Signs & symptoms

General symptoms

- sharp pain at bite site
- profuse sweating
- nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain.

Additional symptoms of a Funnel-Web or Mouse spider bite

- copious secretion of saliva
- muscular twitching and breathing difficulty
- small hairs stand on end
- numbness around mouth
- copious tears
- disorientation
- fast pulse
- markedly increased blood pressure
- confusion leading to unconsciousness.

Additional symptoms of a Red-back spider bite

- intense local pain which increases and spreads
- small hairs stand on end
- patchy sweating
- headache
- muscle weakness or spasms.

Possible signs and symptoms of other spider bites

- burning sensation
- swelling
- blistering.

What to do

First aid for Funnel-web / Mouse spider: pressure bandage & immobilise

- 1 Follow DRSABCD.
- 2 Call triple zero (000) for an ambulance.
- 3 Lie the patient down and ask them to keep still. Reassure the patient.
- 4 If on a limb, apply an elasticised roller bandage (10–15 cm wide) over the bite site as soon as possible.
- 5 Apply a further elasticised roller bandage (10–15 cm wide), starting just above the fingers or toes and moving upwards on the bitten limb as far as can be reached.
 - Use clothing or other material if an elasticised roller bandage is not available.
 - Apply the bandage as firmly as possible to the limb. You should be unable to easily slide a finger between the bandage and the skin.
- 6 Immobilise the bandaged limb using splints.
- 7 Keep the patient lying down and completely still (immobilised).
- 8 Write down the time of the bite and when the bandage was applied. If possible, mark the location of the bite site (if known) on the skin with a pen, or photograph the site. Do not wash venom off the skin or clothes because it may assist identification.
- 9 Stay with the patient until medical aid arrives.

First aid for Red-back and other spider bites

- 1 Wash the injured site with soap and water.
- 2 Apply a cold pack to the bitten or stung area for 15 minutes and reapply if pain continues.
- 3 Seek medical attention if the patient develops severe symptoms.

In a medical emergency call Triple Zero (000)

DRSABCD Danger ▶ Response ▶ Send for help ▶ Airway ▶ Breathing ▶ CPR ▶ Defibrillation

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