

FIRST AID

Let your supervisor or co-workers know that you have been stung.

If you have a severe allergic reaction—obtain medical assistance immediately!

Lie down until help arrives.

Remove the stinger as quickly as possible. Use your fingernail to scrape it away in the direction that the stinger and attached venom sac lie; the faster you remove the stinger, the less venom you will receive.



Photo: healthline.com

To soothe the area, use a cold compress, calamine lotion, or a paste of baking soda and water. Do not scratch the site of the sting. Anti-itch medications include over-the-counter preparations such as Benadryl, but they can make you drowsy.

Monitor yourself. Get emergency medical help if allergic symptoms develop later.

RESOURCES

Safety & Health Tech Tips US Dept of Agriculture.

http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/fs_pubs/08672331/08672331dpi72.pdf

UAB Medicine

<http://www.health.uab.edu/17607/>

NIOSH Safety & Health Topics

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/insects/>

McKinley Health Center

http://www.mckinley.illinois.edu/Handouts/honeybee_insect_stings.html



Environmental Health & Safety Office

Physical Plant Bldg
Phone 791-283-3882

Campus Police Emergency Line
781-283-5555

<http://www.wellesley.edu/Safety/ehs.html>

WELLESLEY COLLEGE
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND
SAFETY OFFICE



EHS GUIDANCE
WORKING WITH HONEY BEES



Photo: John Severns

What You Need to Know

Prevention

If you are allergic to insect stings or bites, inform your supervisor before working with them. If you have a severe allergy, you should not work with bees and you should carry an epinephrine shot (prescribed by your doctor); be aware of its expiration date.

Honey bees are bothered by dark colors and some scents (e.g., banana). Wear light colored, smooth finished clothing.

Wear appropriate work attire (i.e., long pants and sleeves, closed shoes) to cover as much of your body as possible. Always wear a beekeeping veil. Your supervisor can give you a “bee suit” (i.e., coveralls) that covers you totally. Ticks that transmit Lyme Disease are present on Wellesley Campus; appropriate bee dress will also protect you from ticks.

Bring a “bee sting first aid kit” with you out in the field, just in case.

If you get stung, walk calmly away from the hive until you don’t hear any more bees buzzing. Do not wave your arms or shout as you leave as you will attract more attention from upset bees.

Honey bees have barbed stingers that become embedded in skin when they sting, thus an upset bee can sting you only once.

Is it a Local or Allergic Reaction?

Local reactions, such as redness, swelling, pain, and itching, are a result of tissue damage caused by the venom that a stinger injects. Swelling can be worse on the second day as the local reaction progresses. Medical care is not generally required for local reactions. Time will heal it! Symptoms can persist for hours or days.

Systemic or allergic reactions can be mild to severe and include itching and hives both near and far from the sting and red, itchy eyes. More severe reactions include swelling of the throat or difficulty breathing, dizziness, severe headache, stomach cramps, loss of consciousness, or shock. Epinephrine pens (EpiPens) are used in the case of throat swelling or loss of consciousness.

If you suspect a generalized allergic reaction, seek medical care immediately. If an epinephrine pen is available, you can choose to use it. An EpiPen is available in the Mattila lab.

Honey bees have a different venom than other stinging insects (e.g., bumble bees, wasps); this means that your reaction to one kind of insect does not indicate how you will react to stings from other kinds of insects.

If you want to get tested for your reaction to stings before you work with honey bees, see Health Services website: <http://www.wellesley.edu/Health/Services/allergy.html>

for information on the Allergy and Asthma Center on Rt. 9 in Chestnut Hill and other facilities that can conduct testing for you.



Medical Providers & Emergency Care

- Health Services at x 2810. Located in Simpson.
- Newton Wellesley Hospital Emergency Room on Rt. 16 in Newton.
- Campus Police x 5555.