

Insect bites and stings

Explain dangers

When working outside, you can be exposed to bites and stings. Some examples of insects that you may come across include:

- Ants
- Stinging flying insects such as bees, wasps, and hornets
- Chiggers (red bugs)
- Ticks
- Spiders
- Mosquitoes
- Flies

Some negative health effects that can result from being stung or bitten include:

- Lyme disease (from ticks)
 - Fever, chills
 - Fatigue, muscle and/or joint pain
 - Rash
- West Nile Virus (from mosquitoes)
 - Headache, stiff neck
 - Fever
 - Nausea, vomiting
 - Drowsiness, confusion
- Allergic reaction
 - Swelling in the face/neck, or wherever stung
 - Difficulty breathing
 - Drop in blood pressure
 - Dizziness

Identify controls

- Routinely check your body for ticks. If you spot a tick, remove it as soon as possible:
 - With fine-tipped tweezers, gently grasp the tick and pull it in an upwards direction, away from your skin. Ensure the tick's mouth parts are also removed from your skin.
 - Do not squish the tick. Doing so may cause Lyme bacteria to pass from the tick into your bloodstream.

- Wear insect repellent when you know you are going to be working outside. Products containing 20-30% DEET have been shown to provide several hours of protection.
- When applying insect repellent:
 - Always follow directions on the product label regarding correct use and when to reapply
 - Avoid spraying directly onto your face
 - Avoid spraying directly onto broken skin, cuts, or wounds
 - Never spray your hard hat with repellent, as it can damage the material.
- Wear long-sleeve shirts and pants when working outside.
- Insects are generally attracted to heavily scented soaps, lotions and floral perfumes. Avoid wearing perfume or cologne, or using perfumed soaps, shampoos and deodorants.
- For the same reason, avoid eating bananas and using banana-scented products while on the jobsite.
- If using outdoor work tables for lunch and breaks, always clean up after eating and don't leave food out in the open.
- Regularly visit **publichealthontario.ca** to review risk area maps and surveillance reports for Lyme disease, West Nile virus, and other insect-borne illnesses. This can help you to identify if there are any known risks in the area where you are working.

Demonstrate

With your crew, demonstrate the application of the insect repellent you have on site. Go over the application instructions as found on the label.

Review the Public Health Ontario website (publichealthontario.ca) to determine if your jobsite is within a risk area for Lyme disease. Discuss any findings with your crew.

Review the correct method of tick removal. Show workers where they can access tweezers.