



Bug Bites

Your child has been diagnosed or is suspected of having a bug bite(s) and may be experiencing:

- Itchy, red bumps
- Swelling
- Discomfort and/or pain
- Often bug bites look like a hive

What to Notice

- While most insect bites are a small red bump, some are larger (like a hive) and some have a small water blister in the center.
- A large hive does not mean your child has an allergy.
- The redness does not mean the bite is infected.

Expected Course

- Most insect bites are itchy for several days.
- The swelling may last 7 days.
- Insect bites of the upper face can cause severe swelling around the eye or ear, but this is harmless.
- The swelling is usually worse in the morning after lying down all night. It will improve after standing for a few hours.
- Any pinkness or redness usually lasts 3 days.

Care & Treatment

- Steroid Cream: To reduce the itching, use 1% hydrocortisone cream (no prescription). Apply 3 times a day until the itch is gone. If not available, apply a baking soda paste until you can get some.
- Antihistamine: If the bite is very itchy after local treatment, give a dose of an antihistamine (e.g., Benadryl) or other allergy medicine (e.g., Zyrtec). Sometimes it helps, especially in allergic children. (see dosage table)
- If 1% hydrocortisone cream is not available, apply an ice cube in a wet washcloth for 20 minutes.
- Also apply firm, sharp, direct, steady pressure to the bite for 10 seconds to reduce the itch. A fingernail, pen cap, or other object can be used.
- Antihistamine: If the bite is very itchy after local treatment, give a dose of an antihistamine (e.g., Benadryl) or other allergy medicine (e.g., Zyrtec). Sometimes it helps, especially in allergic children.
- If bite is painful, give acetaminophen (e.g., Tylenol) or ibuprofen for pain relief. See Dosage table.

Medications:

Acetaminophen (Tylenol): ALL AGES	Infant/Children's Suspension Liquid 160mg/5mL	Junior Strength Chewable Tablet
Weight	Dose	Tablets
6 -11 lbs	¼ tsp or 1.25 mL	
12-17 lbs	½ tsp or 2.5 mL	
18-23 lbs	¾ tsp or 3.75 mL	
24-35 lbs	1 tsp or 5 mL	
36-47 lbs	1 ½ tsp or 7.5 mL	
48-59 lbs	2 tsp or 10 mL	2 tablets
60-71 lbs	2 ½ tsp or 12.5 mL	2 ½ tablets
72-95 lbs	3 tsp or 15 mL	3 tablets
>96 lbs		4 tablets

*Use weight to dose. One dose lasts 4-6 hours.

Ibuprofen (Motrin): > 6 MONTHS OF AGE	Infant Drops 50mg/1.25 mL (Ages 6 - 23 months)	Children's Suspension 100mg/5 mL (Ages 2- 11)	Children's Chewable Tablets 50mg	Junior Strength Chewable Tablets or Capsules 100mg
Weight	Dropperful	Dose	Tablets	Tablet or Capsule
12-17 lbs	1 = 1.25 mL			
18-23 lbs	1 ½ = 1.875 mL			
24-35 lbs		1 tsp or 5 mL	2 tablets	
36-47 lbs		1 ½ tsp or 7.5 mL	3 tablets	
48-59 lbs		2 tsp or 10 mL	4 tablets	2 tablets
60-71 lbs		2 ½ tsp or 12.5 mL	5 tablets	2 ½ tablets
71-95 lbs		3 tsp or 15 mL	6 tablets	3 tablets

*Use weight to dose. One dose lasts 6-8 hours.

Benadryl (Diphenhydramine) > 6 MONTHS OF AGE	Childrens Liquid Benadryl 12.5mg/5mL	Childrens 25 mg Benadryl Tablet
Weight		
20-24 lbs	4 mL	
25-37 lbs	5 mL	½ tablet
38-47 lbs	7.5 mL	½ tablet
50-99 lbs	10 mL	1 tablets
100 + lbs		2 Tablet

Return to Childcare/School

- Your child can return to school or child care when feeling better and any fever is gone.
- Ear infections are not contagious.

When to Call

Continue Self-Care at Home

- Mosquito or bug bites with home care manageable skin reactions as seen in previous bites

Call Office to be Seen Within 24-72 Hours

- SEVERE local itching (interferes with normal activities) not improved after 48 hours of hydrocortisone cream and oral antihistamine

Call Office to be Urgently Seen

- Over 3 days (72 hours) after the bite and spreading red area or streak with fever
- Over 3 days (72 hours) after the bite and redness now becoming larger
- Over 3 days (72 hours) after the bite and redness is very painful to touch
- Widespread hives, widespread itching or facial swelling are the only symptoms AND no serious allergic reaction in the past
- Severe pain is not improved after 2 hours of pain medicine
- Scab that looks infected (drains pus or increases in size) and doesn't respond to 48 hours of antibiotic ointment

Go to ER now

- Can't walk or can barely walk
- Stiff neck (can't touch chin to chest)
- Unexplained fever and recent travel outside the country to high risk area

Call 911 now

- Anaphylactic reaction suspected (e.g., sudden onset of difficulty breathing, difficulty swallowing or wheezing following bite)
- Difficult to awaken or acting confused (e.g., disoriented, slurred speech)
- Hoarseness or cough with rapid onset
- Life-threatening allergic reaction in the past to same insect bite (not just hives or swelling) AND < 2 hours since bite