San Mateo County Emergency Medical Services

Stings/Venomous Bites

For snake, scorpion, insect, and marine envenomation (e.g., stingrays, jelly fish), NOT for animal bites; use traumatic injury

History
- Type of bite or sting
- Description or photo of creature for identification, if safe to do so
- Time, location, size of bite or sting
- Previous reaction to bite or sting
- Domestic vs. wild
- Tetanus and Rabies risk
- Immunocompromised patient

Signs and Symptoms
- Rash, skin break, or wound
- Pain, soft tissue swelling, or redness
- Blood oozing from the bite wound
- Evidence of infection
- Shortness of breath or wheezing
- Allergic reaction, hives, or itching
- Hypotension or shock

Differential
- Animal bite
- Human bite
- Snake bite (poisonous)
- Spider bite (poisonous)
- Insect sting/bite (bee, wasp, ant, or tick)
- Infection risk
- Rabies risk
- Tetanus risk

E
General wound care

P
Consider, IV/IO

Anaphylaxis

Yes

If needed
California Poison Control
(800) 222-1222

No

Serious injury or hypotension

Yes

Shock

Trauma

Identification of animal, if possible

Spider bite
Bee/wasp sting

Snake bite

Animal
Human bite

Marine envenomations

E
Consider, applying cold pack(s)
Remove any constricting clothing/bands/jewelry
Cardiac monitor
Consider, IV
For pain consider, Fentanyl

P

P

E
Immobilize injury/limb
Elevate wound location at the level of the heart
Remove any constricting clothing/bands/jewelry
DO NOT apply COLD PACKS
Mark margin of swelling/redness and time
Cardiac monitor
Consider, IV
For pain consider, Fentanyl

P

P

E
Immobilize injury/limb
Cardiac monitor
Consider, IV
For pain consider, Fentanyl

P

P

E
Immobilize injury/limb
Cardiac monitor
Consider, IV
For pain consider, Fentanyl

P

P

Notify receiving facility.
Contact Base Hospital for medical direction

Effective November 2018
Treatment Protocol E04
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Effective October 2019
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**Pearls**

- Poisonous snakes in our region are generally of the pit viper family: six rattlesnake species.
- If no pain or swelling is present, envenomation is unlikely. About 25% of snake bites are dry bites.
- Black Widow spider bites tend to be minimally painful initially, but over a few hours, muscular and severe abdominal pain may develop (black spider with a red hourglass on the belly).
- Brown Recluse spider bites are minimally painful to painless. Little reaction is noted initially but tissue necrosis at the site of the bite develops over the next few days (brown spider with fiddle shape on back).
- Evidence of infection includes: swelling, redness, drainage, fever, and red streaks proximal to wound.
- Consider contacting the California Poison Control Center for identification (800) 222-1222.

**Nonvenomous snake bite**

![Nonvenomous snake bite diagram](image1)

**Venomous snake bite**

![Venomous snake bite diagram](image2)

**Fang marks**

**Jellyfish sting**

![Jellyfish sting image](image3)

**Stingray sting**

![Stingray sting image](image4)

**California King snake**

![California King snake image](image5)

**Rattlesnake**

![Rattlesnake image](image6)

**Common Garter snake**

![Common Garter snake image](image7)