Insect Bites and Stings

Toolbox Talks are intended to facilitate health and safety discussions. Find more Toolbox Talks on the Occupational Safety web page.

General Information
Summer in Iowa means more time outside and exposure to insects that bite and sting.

Protection
- Wear clothes that cover most of your body.
- Use insect repellent and follow the label instructions.
- Avoid contact with overgrown grass, brush, and leaf litter if possible.
- If stung, clean the affected area with soap and water.
- Call 911 or seek medical assistance immediately if you or a co-worker have a severe reaction (hives, trouble breathing, become dizzy, etc.) to an insect bite or sting.
- EpiPens must only be used as prescribed by a physician.
- Scrub the bite area with soap and water, then apply calamine lotion or anti-itch cream like hydrocortisone.
- Scratching may increase irritation or allow bites to become infected.

Bees and wasps
- Bees in Iowa include honey, carpenter, ground, and bumble.
- Wasps in Iowa include yellow jacket, paper, mud dauber and cicada killer.
- They are usually non-aggressive unless they are disturbed or feel threatened, but they will sting to protect themselves.
- Bees only sting once because the stinger is embedded in the skin, killing the bee.
- Wasps can sting multiple times.
- Stings will initially cause a sharp pain followed by redness and swelling and can be deadly for people who are allergic to the venom.

Mosquito
- Mosquitos feed on blood and can spread disease.
- Bites typically result in a raised bump on the skin that is red and itchy.
- Cover, empty, or treat containers, buckets, or pots with standing water to reduce potential breeding sites.

Chigger
- Chiggers are mites found on vegetation until they find a host.
- They burrow into the top layer of skin and usually appear in groups.

Discussion Date: ____________________________
Supervisor: ____________________________
Participants: ____________________________

Source: https://www.healthline.com/ and Preferred Pest Control