

SPIDER BITES



Managing a spider bite

Signs & symptoms

- sharp pain at bite site
- profuse sweating
- nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain.

Additional symptoms of a Funnel-Web spider bite:

- copious secretion of saliva
- confusion leading to unconsciousness
- muscular twitching and breathing difficulty
- small hairs stand on end
- numbness around mouth
- copious tears
- disorientation
- fast pulse
- markedly increased blood pressure.

Additional symptoms of a red-back spider bite:

- intense local pain which increases and spreads
- small hairs stand on end
- patchy sweating
- headache
- muscle weakness or spasms.

Possible signs and symptoms of other spider bites:

- burning sensation
- swelling
- blistering.

Management

1. Follow DRSABCD.

2. Lie patient down.

3. Calm and reassure patient.

4. Apply management for:

▼ **Funnel-web / Mouse spider**

- if on a limb, apply a broad pressure bandage (crepe bandage preferred) over the bite site as soon as possible
- apply a firm pressure immobilisation bandage starting just above fingers or toes and as far up limb as possible
- ensure patient does not move
- ensure an ambulance has been called (000).

▼ **Red-back spider**

- apply cold pack/compress to area to lessen pain
- seek medical aid.

▼ **Other spider bites**

- wash with soap and water
- apply icepack to relieve the pain/discomfort
- seek medical aid if patient develops severe symptoms.

In an emergency, call triple zero (000) for an ambulance

For more information on St John first aid training and kits, visit www.stjohn.org.au or freecall 1300 360 455