**SPIDER BITES**

Managing a spider bite

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**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.

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**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 ice pack to relieve the pain/discomfort
     - seek medical aid if patient develops severe symptoms.

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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

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