



## Things That “Sting”

**Wasps:** Yellow jacket wasps become a nuisance in our area from late summer until the first freeze. If you have been to a picnic, outside restaurant, sporting event, or any outdoor event you have most likely come across these wasps. At this time of the year they are scavenging for food and unfortunately, they are attracted to human food.

- Never swing, strike or run away from a wasp. Quick movements can provoke the wasp to sting.
- If you’re eating outdoors, keep your food covered- especially fruit and soft drinks.
- Refuse containers should have tight-fitting lids. Pet bowls should be cleaned after using.
- Avoid using perfume, aftershave lotions, scented soaps and shampoos when you will be in areas where bees and wasps congregate.
- Avoid wearing bright, colored flowery prints. Jewelry that is shiny may also attract bees and wasps.

**Spiders:** The brown recluse and black widow are two types of spiders that callers frequently ask about. The black widow may have a red hour glass on its belly. The brown recluse usually is yellow-orange in color and has a violin-shaped marking on its head. These bites are seldom fatal, but can have serious side effects. If bitten, contact the poison center. Symptoms may vary and treatment is different for each spider.

**Allergy medications:** Seasonal allergies can make people miserable this time of the year. Stinging, red, watery eyes and runny noses are common symptoms of ragweed and mold in the fall. These symptoms are combated with nasal sprays, antihistamines, decongestants and inhalers. Be careful not to leave these medications out where young children may have access to them. Always read your medication labels and keep track of the times you take your medications to avoid errors. Medications are the leading cause of childhood poisoning. Medications are also the leading cause of poisoning deaths in adults.

**Peppers:** Capsaicin, the oily chemical irritant found in hot peppers, can cause stinging, redness and burning pain when handled. The oil is spread easily, so avoid touching areas such as the eyes and face. The best prevention is to wear rubber gloves while canning.

The Nebraska Regional Poison Center number, 1-800-222-1222, should be programmed into every phone and should be the first place you call to get immediate, professional, 24/7 help from the experts.