

# Normal and Allergic Reactions to Insect Stings

after J. O. Schmidt, in *The Hive and the Honey Bee* (1995)

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- I. Normal, non-allergic reactions at the time of the sting
  - Pain, sometimes sharp and piercing
  - Burning, or itching burn
  - Redness (erythema) around the sting site
  - A white area (wheal) immediately surrounding the sting puncture mark
  - Swelling (edema)
  - Tenderness to touch
  
- II. Normal, non-allergic reaction hours or days after the sting
  - Itching
  - Residual redness
  - A small brown or red damage spot at the puncture site
  - Swelling at the sting site
  
- III. Large local reactions
  - Massive swelling (angioedema) around the sting site extending over an area of 10 cm or more and frequently increasing in size for 24 to 72 hours, sometimes lasting up to a week in duration
  
- IV. Cutaneous allergic reactions
  - Urticaria (hives, nettle rash) anywhere on the skin
  - Angiodema (massive swelling) remote from the sting site
  - Generalized pruritis (itching) of the skin
  - Generalized erythema (redness) of the skin remote from the sting site
  
- V. Non life-threatening systemic allergic reactions
  - Allergic rhinitis or conjunctivitis
  - Minor respiratory symptoms
  - Abdominal cramps
  - Severe gastrointestinal upset
  - Weakness
  - Fear or other subjective feelings
  
- VI. Life-threatening systemic allergic reactions
  - Shock
  - Unconsciousness
  - Hypotension or fainting
  - Respiratory distress (difficulty in breathing)
  - Laryngeal blockage (massive swelling in the throat)