

Standard Operating Procedures

#AU 0010 Insect Bites

Materials:

Insect repellent
Soap or disinfecting wipes
Laboratory silicone gloves
Tweezers

Prevention/Precaution:

When weather permits, wear long-sleeves, long pants and socks when outdoors. Use an EPA-registered insect repellent such as those with DEET, picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus on exposed skin. Do not spray repellent on the skin under your clothing. The hours from dusk to dawn are peak biting times for many species of mosquitoes. Take *extra* care to use repellent and protective clothing during evening and early morning -- or consider avoiding outdoor activities during these times. If possible, wear light-coloured clothing, which is less attractive to biting insects and makes it easier to see ticks. When returning from the field, carefully check your clothing for ticks. When you get home, carefully check your skin for ticks – have someone help look in hard to see areas like along your hairline and behind your ears.

Procedure:

For minor bites (e.g., mosquito), clean the affected area thoroughly with soap and water (or with disinfecting wipes) to prevent further damage to the skin. If any of the insect remains attached (e.g., stinger), gently remove with tweezers prior to cleaning the affected area (if possible wear safety gloves). Refrain from scratching because this may cause the skin to break down and an infection to form.

For tick bites, the tick must be carefully removed to ensure mouthparts are not left behind. To remove the tick, use fine-tipped tweezers and grasp the tick as close to your skin as possible. Pull the tick straight out, gently but firmly. Avoid squeezing the tick or twisting the tweezers. Once you have removed a tick, wash your skin with soap and water and then disinfect your skin and your hands with an alcohol swab. Put the tick in a small container and contact your local public health unit. They can identify the species (black-legged ticks are carriers of Lyme disease) and test the tick for disease if appropriate. Algoma Public Health Unit Tick Collection Guidelines:

<http://www.algomapublichealth.com/environment-inspections/environmental-health/submitting-a-tick/>

For all bites, you may treat itching at the site of the bite with an over-the-counter antihistamine, or an anti-itch lotion may help relieve the itching. People who have a history of severe reactions to bites or stings may have been prescribed an anaphylaxis kit. The kit should be used according to the doctor's instructions, and Principle Investigators must be notified of any pre-existing conditions/allergies prior to students/research assistants working in the field. See SOP #AU0008 (Allergies) for more details.

Be aware of, and report to medical personnel immediately, if any of the following symptoms are present:

- Flu-like symptoms
- Fever
- Numbness
- Rash
- Confusion
- Weakness
- Pain and swelling in the joints
- Heart palpitations

- Paralysis
- Shortness of breath
- Nausea and vomiting

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