

Algoma University Animal Care Committee	
#AU 0010 Insect Bites	
Issue date: June 2012	Last revised: May/2025

1. Purpose

To establish procedures to prevent insect bites and ensure timely and appropriate response when bites or stings occur during university-sanctioned activities such as fieldwork, campus maintenance, outdoor events, or biological research.

2. Policy

Health and safety guidelines and regulations

3. Responsibility

Principal investigator, their research staff, and their student investigators

4. Training Required

None

5. Materials Required

- Insect repellent
- Soap or disinfecting wipes
- Laboratory gloves
- Tweezers
- Long Pants
- Long Sleeve Shirt
- Bug Bite Cream

Definitions

Insect Bite: Injury from the piercing mouthparts of an insect (e.g., mosquito, tick, flea).

Insect Sting: Injury caused by the injection of venom through a stinger (e.g., bees, wasps, ants).

Anaphylaxis: A severe, potentially life-threatening allergic reaction to an insect sting or bite.

Common Biting/Stinging Insects

Types	Examples	Risks
Biting	Mosquitoes, ticks, fleas, bedbugs	Disease transmission (lyme disease, malaria, dengue)
Stinging	Bees, wasps, hornets, fire ants	Allergic reactions, pain, swelling
Venomous arthropods	Spiders (e.g., black widow, brown recluse)	Tissue damage, systemic symptoms

6. Procedures

Prevention/Precaution:

1. When weather permits, wear long-sleeves, long pants and socks when outdoors.
 - a. 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.
 - b. The hours from dusk to dawn are peak biting times for many species of mosquitoes.
 - c. Take extra care to use repellent and protective clothing during evening and early morning -- or consider avoiding outdoor activities during these times.

Procedure:

1. 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.
2. If any of the insect remains attached (e.g., stinger or tick), put on the laboratory gloves gently remove with tweezers prior to administering cleaning the affected area.
3. Refrain from scratching because this may cause the skin to break down and an infection to form.
4. If removing a tick be sure to save the tick and submit it to the Algoma Public Health Unit.
 - a. Follow these guidelines and refer to the link:
 - b. Put the tick in a secure container.
 - c. Bring the tick to your local APH office for identification. If the tick cannot be brought to an office within one week of removal, the tick may be placed in a freezer until drop off.
 - d. Complete a Tick Submission Form at your local APH office, or complete form beforehand.
<http://www.algomapublichealth.com/environment-inspections/environmental-health/submitting-a-tick/>
 - e. You may treat itching at the site of the bite with an over-the-counter antihistamine such as Benadryl, or a lotion such as Calamine may help relieve the itching.
 - f. 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.
5. Be aware of, and report to medical personnel immediately, if any of the following symptoms are present:
 - a. Flu-like symptoms
 - b. Fever

- c. Numbness
- d. Rash
- e. Confusion
- f. Weakness
- g. Pain and swelling in the joints
- h. Heart palpitations
- i. Paralysis
- j. Shortness of breath
- k. Nausea and vomiting

7. References (if applicable)

REVISION HISTORY		
Revision #	Revision Date	Summary of Changes
1	May 1, 2019	
2	April 23, 2023	
3	May 2, 2024	The ACC committee feels the H&S office at the university needs to also be responsible for reviewing this SOP because it relates to the individual working in the field and their safety.
4	July 15, 2024	Reformatted to new SOP template
5	May 2025	Department of Life, Health & Safety and Security, reviewed and provided comments and additions to SOP.