

Spider bite



In a medical emergency,
call Triple Zero (000) for
an ambulance.

Signs & symptoms

General 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
- muscular twitching and breathing difficulty
- small hairs stand on end
- numbness around mouth
- copious tears
- disorientation
- fast pulse
- markedly increased blood pressure
- confusion leading to unconsciousness.

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.

What to do

1. Follow DRSABCD.
2. Lie the patient down.
3. Calm and reassure the patient.

Apply management for:

Funnel-web / Mouse spider

- if on a limb, apply a broad crepe bandage over the bite site as soon as possible
- apply a heavy crepe or elasticised roller bandage starting just above the fingers or toes of the bitten limb, and move upwards on the limb as far as can be reached (include the bite). Apply firmly without stopping blood supply to the limb.
- immobilise the injured limb with splints and ensure the patient does not move
- ensure an ambulance has been called.

Red-back spider

- apply an icepack (cold compress) to the bitten area to lessen pain
- seek medical attention if patient develops severe symptoms.

Other spider bites

- wash with soap and water
- apply icepack (cold compress) to relieve the pain
- seek medical attention if patient develops severe symptoms.