



# Topic: Tiny Bites

*Ticks and spiders can cause painful and sometimes fatal reactions. Knowing what precautions to take could save you from serious illness or death.*

## When ticks stick to you

When you find a tick has taken to you, here's what to do:

- ✚ Using a pair of fine-tipped tweezers, grab the tick close to the skin and pull it straight out. Don't twist or the head may break off and stay in your skin. Clean the wound with soap and water or alcohol, say doctors writing in Prevention.
- ✚ Do Not: Put a lit match or a hot pin on a tick bite to move the tick. Not only won't it work, but by breathing in the smoke, you might absorb any bacteria or viruses the tick may be carrying.
- ✚ Do Not: Smear the bite with mineral oil or petroleum jelly, which may cause the tick to inject bacteria into the wound.
- ✚ Do Not: Try to remove it with your bare hand.
- ✚ If you get a rash, fever, lose coordination, have extreme fatigue, joint or muscle pain, see a doctor fast.

## Spiders: The good and the bad

Only the black widow and the brown recluse have bites that can be fatal. There is an anti-venom of the black widow, but none for a brown recluse's bite. (It can be treated with antihistamines, cortisone and antibiotics.) The female black widow (only the female is poisonous) is half an inch long, with a red or yellow hourglass design on the underside of a shiny black body. It prefers dark places close to the ground and may live under furniture, in crawl spaces, outbuildings and debris. It's most commonly found in warm climates, but may appear in other areas.



The brown recluse is also 1/2 inch long. It has a yellowish brown body and a distinctive, dark, violin-shaped mark on its head. Although mainly a denizen of the Southwest and West, it can be carried to other areas. It inhabits places similar to the black widow as well as in folds of clothing.

If you have a spider bite that is painful, red or swollen, assume it may be dangerous. Don't wait for evidence of poisoning. And if sweating, vomiting, muscle cramps, joint pains, chills, fever or breathing difficulties develop, get medical help immediately.