

# Spider bites



**St John**

**IN A MEDICAL EMERGENCY CALL TRIPLE ZERO (000) FOR AN AMBULANCE.**

**DRSABCD** Danger ► Response ► Send for help ► Airway ► Breathing ► CPR ► Defibrillation

The DRSABCD Action Plan is the first step when providing first aid. Use this to assess the immediate situation.

## SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

### General symptoms

- sharp pain at bite site
- profuse sweating
- nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain.

### Additional symptoms of a Funnel-Web or Mouse 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

### FIRST AID FOR FUNNEL-WEB / MOUSE SPIDER

- 1 Follow DRSABCD.
- 2 Lie the patient down.
- 3 Calm and reassure the patient.
- 4 If on a limb, apply an elasticised roller bandage (10–15 cm wide) over the bite site as soon as possible.  
Apply a further elasticised roller bandage (10–15 cm wide), starting just above the fingers or toes and moving upwards on the bitten limb as far as can be reached.  
Apply the bandage as tightly as possible to the limb.
- 5 Immobilise the bandaged limb using splints.
- 6 Keep the patient lying down and completely still (immobilised).
- 7 Stay with the patient until medical aid arrives.

### FIRST AID FOR RED-BACK SPIDER

- 1 Apply a cold pack to the bitten or stung area for 15 minutes and reapply if pain continues.
- 2 Seek medical attention if patient develops severe symptoms.

### FIRST AID FOR OTHER SPIDER BITES

- 1 Wash the injured site with soap and water.
- 2 Apply a cold pack to the bitten or stung area for 15 minutes and reapply if pain continues.
- 3 Seek medical attention if the patient develops severe symptoms.

**YOU COULD SAVE A LIFE WITH FIRST AID TRAINING [WWW.STJOHN.ORG.AU](http://WWW.STJOHN.ORG.AU) • 1300 360 455**