

SCORPIONS ARE OUT EARLY THIS YEAR



With Arizona registering the hottest February on record this fact was not lost on our scorpion population. They have arrived early this year. Just last week a nurse friend of ours in Scottsdale realized that her Golden had been stung by a scorpion and fortunately she knew what to do. Do you know what to do?

Reproduced from an article by WIKIPETS

There are more than 1050 species of scorpions, and at least 30 are found in the southwestern United States. Although all scorpion stings hurt like crazy, most aren't any more dangerous than a bee sting. The exception is the sting of the bark scorpion, one of the smallest species.

Symptoms

The non-toxic stings cause intense, fiery pain that lasts up to an hour. This then gives way to numbness and tingling, which fades after about 24 hours. Pets may yelp and hold up the leg that has been stung or lick and bite at the sting.

A bark scorpion sting hurts just as much, but it also causes drooling, paralysis, breathing problems, and ultimately, collapse and death in as little as 15 minutes.

All symptoms +

Causes

All scorpions carry hypodermic-like stingers on the ends of their tails, and they can regulate the amount of venom that is injected.

Diagnosis

Some stings aren't visible, while others can cause massive swelling with 15 - 30 minutes.

Treatment

The best treatment for a scorpion sting is rapid transportation to the animal hospital, but first aid can help ensure that your pet gets there in time.

1. **Apply a cold pack** - it is important to make sure the toxin doesn't spread. first, place a cold, wet washcloth on the sting. Then put a cold pack, plastic bag filled with ice, or a bag of frozen peas on top of the cloth. Apply the cold pack for 10 - 30 minutes, several times a day.
2. **Restrict movement** - Put your stung pet in a carrier or box. Prevent him from walking or jumping around, and try to keep him calm. Activity will speed up circulation and spread the poison.
3. **Fit him with a cone collar** - Even if the scorpion wasn't poisonous, a dog who is stung will chew at the sore, which can make the reaction worse. Fit your pet with a collar restraint like a cone shaped Elizabethan collar.
4. **Apply a soothing baking soda paste** - For most scorpion stings, a paste of baking soda will help take the pain away just as it does for bee stings. This can be messy on furry areas of the body, but it works well on sparsely furred regions like the belly. Try to get the paste directly on the skin by separating the fur around the sting. Make this paste by mixing 1 tablespoon of baking soda with enough water to create a thick paste and dab it on the swelling.
5. **Give an antihistamine** - Scorpion venom contains histamine, which causes the pain and inflammation in the wound. If you have an antihistamine like Benadryl, it may help reduce your pet's discomfort. Benadryl can also make him sleepy, which may help keep him calm and quiet until you can reach medical attention. The liquid form of Benadryl usually comes in a dose of 12.5mg per teaspoon - pills are usually 25mg each. Pets will need 1mg per pound of body weight (check the max dosage with your vet) every 6 - 8 hours. That means a 10 pound cat or dog should get about 3/4 teaspoon of liquid or half a pill

If your pet stops breathing - If your pet isn't breathing, you will have to start artificial respiration right away.

1. Close your pet's mouth, with 2 quick breaths, watching to see if his chest rises.
2. Give 15 - 20 breaths a minutes until he starts breathing again on his own or you reach medical help.

For stings on the tail or leg - If veterinary help is more than 2 hours away and the sting is on a leg or the tail, apply a snug bandage between the bite and the heart. Wrap a small towel, rope, or string around the limb, then cover it with an elastic bandage like an Ace bandage. If this is not available, just tie the rope or string (a shoestring will work) around the limb. The towel and ace bandage is more effective and slightly safer than the tourniquet style (rope) in slowing the spread of the poison, but you will use what you have available in the situation.

Prevention

Scorpions feed on insects like crickets and grasshoppers, but they can survive for weeks without food. They like to lie and wait for prey in trees, rock piles, old buildings, swimming pools, and other dark, cool places. You will know you have a scorpion problem if you see insect body parts piled neatly in remote corners. The safest way to control these creatures is to contact a certified pet control operator.

Pesticides aren't very effective, but the goal is to remove their food source and have the pest control operator remove the scorpions one by one. Scorpions are most active at night, and they glow in the dark, fluorescing green when they are hit by a black light.

Support

Most of the time, veterinarians prescribe antibiotics for pets who have been stung by scorpions. This helps prevent a secondary infection from the toxin in the venom.

Scorpion stings that become infected can develop areas of dying skin, which need to be cleaned out. You may need to flush out the wound twice a day with an antiseptic solution like Betadine. Purchase this solution from the vet or pet supply stores in a strength of 0.01 - 0.1%. If you purchase higher strength Betadine, dilute it with distilled water until it is the color of weak tea. Call your vet or pharmacist for exact instructions on dilution.