“Bug Bites and Stings”

Most bug bites and stings will heal on their own and don’t require an office visit for evaluation and treatment.

- **Insect bites:** most are small red bumps, some look like a hive and others can have a small water blister in the center
  - Itchy insect bites (mosquito bites) can be treated as follows:
    - Apply calamine lotion or a baking soda paste.
    - Over the counter hydrocortisone 1% cream can be applied 3 times daily.
    - An ice cube in a wet washcloth can be applied for 20 minutes.
    - If local treatment isn’t helping, then an oral antihistamine like Benadryl can be given (see our Medication Dosing Chart at hunterdonpediatrics.org).
  - Painful bites
    - Rub the area for 15-20 minutes with a cotton ball soaked in a baking soda solution (do not use near eyes).
    - Apply an ice cube in a wet wash cloth for 20 minutes.
    - Give acetaminophen or ibuprofen (see our Medication Dosing chart at hunterdonpediatrics.org).
  - Expected course
    - Most bites are itchy for several days.
    - Swelling may last 7 days.
    - Bites of the upper face can cause swelling around the eye (call if there is severe pain or redness).
  - An office visit is necessary if:
    - The bite looks infected – new redness after 48 hours, increased swelling, increased pain, pus or fever.
    - There is severe pain.
    - Redness is not improving after 3 days.

- **Bee, wasp, hornet, yellow jacket sting:**
  - Remove stinger, if present, using a fingernail or credit card to scrape it off. Pulling it off may squeeze out more venom.
  - If the stinger if below skin level, leave alone. It will be shed with normal skin healing.
  - Apply a meat tenderizer solution or baking soda solution on cotton ball for 20 minutes (Do not use near the eye).
  - Give acetaminophen or ibuprofen for pain.
  - If itchy, a dose of Benadryl can be given. Also over-the-counter 1% hydrocortisone cream may be applied 3 times daily.
  - Pain or burning can last 1-2 hours. Swelling may increase over the first 24 hours and redness may be present. Redness can last 3 days and the swelling 7 days.
  - **Call 911 if there is difficulty swallowing or breathing.** Call the office if redness lasts more than 3 days, there is a very large area of swelling, or the area looks infected (worsening redness after 3 days, increasing pain, pus is present or fever).