



Australian Venom  
Research Unit

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factsheet

## Cold Pack Technique



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
MELBOURNE

### Cold Pack Technique

#### What and Why is it Done?

This pain-relieving technique uses the local application of a cold pack or icy water to certain types of venomous bites or stings.

Use this technique for the following venomous bites or stings –



Paralysis Ticks should be removed as completely as possible (e.g. with tweezers).

Do not squeeze or pull on the tick as this may inject more venom into the wound.

See specific instructions for Paralysis Tick Bites

Venomous Leech bites are potentially dangerous.

See specific instructions for Leech Bites

Bites and stings can be dangerous for those people with allergies, especially life-threatening general reactions (called anaphylaxis). Almost as many people die of venom allergy in Australia as from snakebite.

See specific instructions for Allergic Reactions Technique

Bee stings should be scraped or pulled out immediately to prevent further venom being injected – the stinger empties of venom within 30 seconds!

#### How is it Done?

**1** Tell the patient to try to remain calm as most of these bites and stings cause only minor effects such as redness and pain.

*If there are signs of an allergic reaction, go to Step 3.*

**2** Apply a cold pack or icy water to the wound to relieve pain.

Do not put ice directly on the skin or leave the affected limb in icy water for too long – cold can damage the skin).

Apply antiseptic to Paralysis Tick bites and European Wasp stings.

**3** Ask the patient if they have had a severe allergic reaction to the bite or sting before.

*If symptoms of an allergic reaction appear, apply the Allergic Reactions Technique (using an EpiPen).*

**4** Seek medical help immediately.

Meanwhile, maintain basic life support using Emergency Procedures (DR-ABC).