



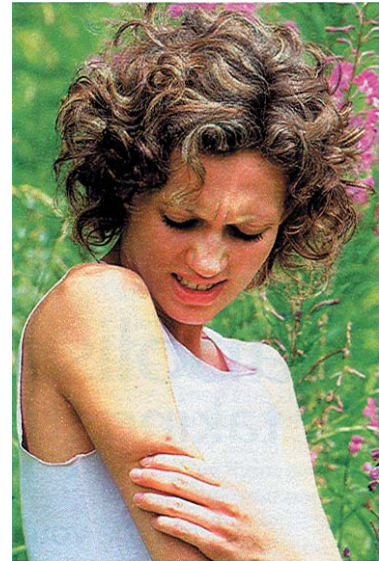
Natural Health

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## Take the ouch out of summer!

Chances are you or someone you know will have a run-in with a mosquito, bee or poisonous plant this summer. Here's what to do...

Got *another* mosquito bite? Accidentally touched a poisonous plant? In summer time, the living isn't always easy. Not to worry. You can stop the pain and itching of warm-weather irritants *instantly* with these safe and effective natural fixes for...



### Bug bites

Oops, too late! You've swatted the mosquito, but it's left its mark! Luckily, the perfect remedy is right at hand—the plantain weed growing in your lawn! “It has long, narrow leaves, and if you pick it, crush the leaves in your hand until they bruise, and apply it to the bite, it will immediately ease any itching,” says naturopathic doctor Eliza Klearman, of Vail, Colorado.

**Another option:** Rub a cut onion on the spot. Onions contain quercetin, a bioflavonoid that quells inflammation, as well as enzymes that break down the chemicals your body releases in response to pain.

### Bee & wasp stings

These insects tend to be attracted by food, which is good news, since if one stings you at a barbecue, mixing a little meat tenderizer containing papain (such as McCormick) with four times as much water, and applying it to the swollen area will neutralize the poison! “Meat tenderizer has enzymes that break down the bonds of protein in the venom that cause the pain,” explains Georgianna Donadio, Ph.D., director of the National Institute of Whole Health in Boston.

**Note:** Wash tenderizer off after 30 minutes.

**Tip:** Out for a walk when a hornet hits? Grab a handful of dirt; mix it with water from your water bottle and slather it on for quick relief. “The mud draws out the fluid and histamine that your body is releasing,” says Donadio.

### Mosquitoes sweet on you?

Pop a daily B-complex supplement! suggests Donadio. “It'll make your skin less alkaline, so bugs won't be as attracted to you.”

## Poison ivy

Even a momentary encounter with poison ivy or oak can have you itching and blistering for weeks unless you take action—fast! Wash the affected skin with cottonballs soaked with rubbing alcohol—ideally within 15 minutes, but within four hours at the very longest—and you'll avoid a skin reaction. "The sap from poison ivy and oak is soluble in alcohol, which means it breaks down the resin that causes the rash," says Dr. Klearman.

**Tip:** Didn't get to wash it away in time? Apply a thick paste of raw oats and water to the rash to draw out the toxins and soothe the skin.

—*Meg Lundstrom*