

If someone is bitten by a funnelweb, apply a firm, wide bandage to the bitten area, extending it as far up or down the limb as you can. Put a splint on the limb, keep the person as still as possible and get them to hospital immediately. Take the spider with you if you catch it.

Redback Spiders

These small (not more than 1cm) spiders have a red or orange spot on their back. They're found all over Australia, often in and around houses where they like dry, dark places such as under floorboards or rafters. In bush areas they're found under logs and bark or in dense foliage. If someone is bitten by a spider, apply iced water to soothe the pain and see a doctor.

Scorpions and Centipedes

In Australia these creatures aren't poisonous. However, they can cause a painful sting - soothe it with a cold compress.

Telephone numbers are correct at time of publication but are not continually updated. You may need to check the numbers in the telephone directory.

NSW Multicultural Health Communication Service

website: [www.http://mhcs.health.nsw.gov.au](http://mhcs.health.nsw.gov.au)

e-mail: mhcs@doh.health.nsw.gov.au

phone: (02) 9382 8111

Avoiding Ticks and Spider Bites

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A walk in the bush - or even a few hours gardening - can bring you into contact with some potentially deadly creatures. Here's how to avoid - and survive - dangerous bites or stings.

Ticks

If you enjoy walks or picnics in the bush, if your house is in or close to bushy areas, or if your children play in long grass, you need to be careful of ticks. These are parasites which can bury themselves in a person's skin and inject a poison which can cause muscle weakness, blurred vision, drowsiness, paralysis and even death. They can be as tiny as a pinhead or as large as a fingernail:

The best way to avoid them is to wear long trousers (preferably tucked into socks or boots), long sleeved shirts and a hat when you're in a bushy area. After being outdoors, check the whole family for ticks, especially in places like the scalp, groin, armpits, back of the knees and the scalp. Because ticks are sometimes hidden by swelling around the bite, it's important to check any lumps carefully.

The best way to remove an attached tick is to use tweezers with a fine point. Grasp the tick behind the head, as close to the skin as possible. Gently pull the tick straight out with steady pressure. Don't twist or jerk the tick. Don't try to kill the tick before removal by using methylated spirits, nail polish

remover, alcohol, petroleum jelly, or anything else - this can make the tick inject more poison. After removing the tick, wash your hands and disinfect the tweezers and the bite.

Funnelweb Spider

The world's deadliest spider lives in parts of NSW including the Sydney suburbs, the Blue Mountains, and coastal areas as far north as Newcastle and as far south as Nowra. Although only a few people who are bitten become very ill or die, the bite can be fatal, especially to young children. Symptoms of funnelweb bite include pain, sweating, nausea, vomiting, difficulty in breathing and twitching.

Funnelwebs are more likely to cause problems in summer and early autumn when they're looking for a mate, or if their burrows are flooded by rain or are disturbed by building, digging or pesticide. To avoid funnelweb bite, keep the garden free of garden rubbish and rubble where these spiders can hide, be careful when digging in the garden or moving rocks or rubbish; keep clothes and shoes off the floor (in funnelweb season, always check inside shoes before you put them on) and remember they can lurk in swimming pools where they can survive for a few days.

People often spot holes in the earth of their garden and wonder if they are funnelweb burrows. Here's an easy way to tell. If the burrow is just lined with the "silk" that spiders spin their webs with, the burrow belongs to a harmless spider, but if threads of this silk train out of the entrance to the burrow along the ground, then it's a funnelweb's burrow.