



SCORPION STING

What Should I Do If a Scorpion Stings My Pet?



We rarely actually *see* a scorpion sting our pet, but sometimes it is fairly obvious—a cat violently shaking and licking it's paw or a

dog yelping and a scorpion in the immediate vicinity. So it can be a fairly safe assumption that the pet was stung.

The venom is immediately, intensely painful at the spot of the sting. Worse, it may lead to systemic toxic reactions as well. After disposing of the scorpion, monitor your pet. If it shows anything more than initial attention to the area of the sting, it should be brought to the attention of a veterinarian.

What Should I Watch For?

Most animals will only show localized pain. Less commonly systemic reactions will occur. Symptoms associated with systemic reactions include difficulty eating or drinking, behavioral abnormalities, trouble with or exaggerated breathing, rigid whole-body muscle spasms, excessive salivation, distention of the abdomen, abnormal eye movements, apparent blindness, excessive tear production, passing urine or stool abnormally, and piloerection (hair “standing on end”). If your pet is quite small, you should have it examined before systemic reactions may occur.

What is in the Poison That Makes It So

Dangerous? - It contains a mixture of compounds. Digestive enzymes and hyaluronidase allow it to move into and through the tissues. Phospholipase and complex phosphorous salts cause intense and immediate pain. Neurotoxins used to paralyze the scorpion's prey, alters the sodium-channel flow in nerves and results in stimulation of the autonomic nervous system and the neuromuscular junctions. This causes paralysis or weakening of muscles and interference with the function of internal organs and blood pressure. The smaller the pet, the more likely

systemic reactions will occur. We see the most severe reactions in small dogs, cats, and ferrets.

Will My Pet Need to be Hospitalized?

Most pets, especially larger ones, will not require intense treatment. The pet's body will eliminate the toxins within 24 hours. Small pets and those showing systemic signs may require some medical help. Many pets will appear mostly normal by the time you arrive at the hospital.

My Pet Was Hospitalized. What's Going to

Happen Now? - The treatment will vary according to the symptoms your pet is showing. Intravenous catheters are usually placed for administration of balanced electrolyte fluids and medications as needed. Narcotic medications are often used to control the pain, which persists for hours. Some will have seizures or show hyperactivity and will require anticonvulsant medications or sedatives.

Severe cases will require intravenous antivenin administration. Often these cases will also require monitoring of the EKG (electrocardiogram) and blood pressure, with medications given as needed. Some will require muscle relaxants to control contracted muscle spasms. Some will require a breathing tube to be placed down their trachea (“windpipe”) due to spasms they are having with their pharynx and larynx.

Will My Pet Be OK?

Most cases will respond within 24 hours of treatment, but occasionally the treatment may require more time. And most pets survive, but some may require pretty intensive care initially.

Thank you for this opportunity to serve you!