

Woodstock Surgery



Blandford Fly Bites

The Blandford Fly (sometimes called blackfly) is a small 2-3mm insect usually found in East Anglia, Oxfordshire and Dorset. Blandford Fly bites are most common during May and June. They often occur on the legs and can be very painful. The effects of the bites on humans range from small blisters to large (up to 22cm diameter) haemorrhagic lesions, which can produce intensely painful stabbing sensations. The saliva of the fly, which passes into the wound, often causes severe irritation, pain, swelling and blistering.

What to do if you get bitten by the Blandford Fly

An insect bite often causes a small lump to develop, which is usually very itchy. A small hole (the actual bite) may also be visible. The lump may have an inflamed (red & swollen) area around it that may be filled with fluid; this is called a weal. Insect bites usually clear up within several hours and they can be safely treated at home.

For example, you may develop an itchy papule (lump) or an itchy weal (an inflamed, fluid-filled area). This may last for several days and the severity of the reaction will depend on your level of sensitivity.

It is important to know the symptoms of a severe allergic reaction. If you or someone you know is bitten or stung by an insect and experiences a severe reaction, emergency medical treatment will be required.

Treatment for Blandford Fly Bites

- Clean the bite wound with soap and water and dry gently
- Creams that contain camomile lotion, steroid cream or anaesthetic can soothe the pain of a bite, as can an antihistamine tablet. Do not apply cream or ointment to broken skin and always follow the instructions on the packet. Even though it may be itchy, try to avoid scratching the bite because you may damage the skin which may allow bacteria to get in
- Redness and irritation are common and should settle within a few days with these measures
- Secondary infection is less common. If you notice red lines appearing on the skin or enlarged lymph nodes (swelling) in your armpit or groin, seek medical advice

Simple precautions like wearing long sleeved shirts and trousers will act as a deterrent to getting bitten by the Blandford Fly. Stay away from clouds of flies on river banks because they can bite.