

Utah Poison Control Center
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Bites, Stings, & Outdoor Things

As summer approaches, people spend more time outdoors. Bites, stings, and exposure to poisonous plants increase during this time. While the majority of exposures to plants and biting or stinging critters do not cause serious problems, a few deserve some attention.

Snakes: The rattlesnake is the only venomous snake in Utah. If someone is bitten, keep the person calm and remove any constricting jewelry or clothing from the affected area. Do not apply a tourniquet or attempt to cut or suction the wound. All bites from venomous snakes require medical attention.

Bees, Wasps, Hornets & Yellow Jackets: Stinging insects can be very serious for those who experience an immediate allergic reaction such as hives, body itching, and difficulty breathing. Individuals with these or similar symptoms should be immediately transported to the hospital by EMS. The majority of people that get stung experience only local symptoms such as pain, redness and swelling. Anyone who receives more than 20 stings, or develops signs/symptoms of infection should seek medical treatment.

Spiders: Fortunately spider bites rarely cause serious medical problems. The main concern with any spider bite is local infection. In Utah, only the black widow and hobo spider produce venom that can cause significant injury. The black widow bite may produce severe pain that radiates from the bite site to the abdomen or back. The hobo spider bite can produce an ulcer at the bite site which can become infected. It is important to clean the bite with soap and water.

Stinging Nettle: This plant is common on moist ground in woodlands and along stream banks. The plant contains several irritating substances that can produce burning and itching. If exposed, remove contaminated clothing and wash the affected area with soap and water for 15 minutes.

Poison Ivy: This plant is scattered throughout the foothills. It contains an oily substance that can remain active for a year or longer on unwashed clothing. Contact with the oil will produce blisters that eventually break open, ooze and then crust over. Remove contaminated clothing and wash with soap and water for 15 minutes.

Follow these prevention tips and enjoy the outdoors

- Do not interfere with wildlife or their habitat
- Never handle a venomous reptile—even if it is dead
- Watch where you step and sit outdoors
- Wear long pants, thick socks, and boots
- Wash all clothing after being outdoors
- If a bite, sting or plant poisoning is suspected call the poison control center at 1-800-222-1222



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Glow Jewelry

Necklaces, bracelets and anklets that glow in the dark are a very popular form of summer jewelry among children of all ages. How do we at the Utah Poison Control Center know this? As the July holidays approach, we receive calls from glow jewelry wearers (or their worried parents) wanting to know what to do if the jewelry breaks and the contents gets on the skin or in the eyes or in the mouths?

Here's the scoop on what's inside glow-in-the-dark jewelry. The glowing effect is produced by a chemical called dibutyl phthalate (pronounced di-bu-til-thal-late). It is widely used in the manufacture of plastics, glues, leather, printing inks, safety glass, and as a solvent for perfume oils. Dibutyl phthalate is an irritant.



You can still have fun with glow jewelry, just use caution and handle the jewelry with care. If jewelry items break and someone is exposed to the chemical, follow these first aid steps and call the poison control center

- **Eyes** – Rinse for 15 minutes with water
- **Skin** – Rinse for 15 minutes with water, then gently wash with soap and water
- **Mouth** – Rinse the mouth with water and drink a cold beverage or suck on ice chips.
- Call the poison center at **1-800-222-1222**

Article revised and used with permission from the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia Poison Control Center

For poison exposures call
1-800-222-1222