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New Cure for Insect Allergies

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New Cure for Insect Allergies

Submitted by

A recent study from *Annals of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology* suggests allergy injections for insect allergy can make sufferers “less allergic.”

If you think summer insects are done setting their sights on ruining your outdoor gathering, think again. The hot and dry climate that exists during August in much of the country is the perfect breeding ground for insects, especially yellow jackets. And for the millions of Americans allergic to insect stings, these late-summer bugs can be deadly.

Research shows insect-sting allergy is increasing, affecting 5 percent of the population. But what much of the population may not understand is that there is something that can be done about it.

“Allergy injections or shots for insect sting allergy can almost always prevent severe reactions to stings,” said Dr. David Golden, an allergy and immunology specialist and the study’s lead author. “It usually provides long-lasting immunity, even after the treatment is stopped.”

Even 10 to 20 years after having an allergic reaction from an insect sting, the chance of having another reaction continues to be up to 70 percent in adults and 30 percent in children. Venom immunotherapy doesn’t completely eliminate the risk of an allergic reaction to insect stings, noted Golden, but almost all of the reactions that do occur (five to 10 percent) are mild, with less than two percent chance of a severe reaction while on treatment. Protection takes effect as soon as the full dose is reached, usually within 2 to 3 months of treatment.

“Allergy sufferers who have had an allergic reaction to an insect sting should be under the care of a board-certified allergist,” said Golden. “For those with severe reactions, prescribed emergency epinephrine should always be carried. Sufferers should also talk with their allergist to see if venom immunotherapy is right for them. It’s not always a cure, but it is close.”

As with other forms of allergy shots, the recommended duration of injections for stinging insect allergy, can run from 3-5 years or longer, depending on a variety of circumstances. It is generally a good idea to see an allergist, who is an expert on diagnosing and treating potentially life-threatening allergic conditions, such as stinging insect allergy. This in-office treatment can help to prevent severe allergic reactions and improving quality of life because people no longer have to fear getting stung.

To reduce the chance of getting stung by late summer insects, the American College of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology (ACAAI) advises you:
Cover up with pants and long-sleeved shirts when gardening or working outdoors.
Avoid walking barefoot in the grass.
Take caution when eating or drinking anything sweet.
Don't wear sweet-smelling perfumes, hairsprays and deodorants when heading outdoors.
Avoid brightly colored clothing with floral patterns.
For more information about insect-sting allergy and to locate an allergist in your area, visit AllergyandAsthmaRelief.org.

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