



National
Guidance

<http://oeapng.info>

Jellyfish and Portuguese Man-of-War Stings

Most stings from jellyfish in UK waters are mild and don't require treatment, or you can treat them yourself. Portuguese Man-of-War stings can be more painful but can be treated in a similar way to jellyfish stings.

However, you should go to A&E or dial 999 if there are severe symptoms, such as difficulty breathing, chest pain, fits or seizures, severe swelling or bleeding, vomiting, light-headedness or loss of consciousness. You should also seek medical attention if there is severe pain that does not go away after 15-20 minutes, or if a large or sensitive area of the body, such as the face or genitals, has been stung, or if the area becomes infected.

First Aid Treatment

There is differing advice about the first aid treatment for jellyfish or Portuguese Man-of-war stings. Those with current first aid training that covers the topic should follow their training. In the absence of a first aider, or someone with recent training, you should follow this guidance, which is based on that from the NHS at www.nhs.uk/conditions/jellyfish-and-other-sea-creature-stings/ (If the link doesn't work, try pasting it into your browser):

- Rinse the affected area with seawater (not fresh water).
- Remove any spines from the skin using tweezers or the edge of a bankcard, taking care not to touch any spines with bare hands.
- Soak the area in very warm water (as hot as can be tolerated) for at least 30 minutes – use hot flannels or towels if you can't soak it.
- Use painkillers (for a child, ensure that they are appropriate for children, in line with permissions from parents).
- DO NOT use vinegar or urine, apply ice or a cold pack, or cover or close the wound.

Some recent research has indicated that vinegar is effective on stings by Lion's Mane jellyfish and Portuguese Men-of-War, and that seawater actually makes the sting worse. However, this has not yet been accepted by the medical authorities.

Identification

The Marine Conservation Society provides an identification chart at: <https://www.mcsuk.org/downloads/wildlife/Jellyfishguide.pdf>.

Overseas

In some parts of the world, stings from sea creatures can be much more serious than in the UK. You should seek local advice about avoidance and treatment before venturing into the sea.

