



Scorpion Stings

Scorpion stings are not uncommon in Las Vegas. Fortunately most of the scorpions that live in North America do not appear to be significantly dangerous to dogs and cats. There is generally only one species of scorpion that is considered dangerous in this area, *Centruroides sculpturatus*, or the bark scorpion. Scorpion venom works by paralyzing the neuromuscular system to immobilize the prey. The venom also contains digestive enzymes which can cause significant discomfort at the site of the sting.

Scorpion stings usually result in pain and itching at the site of sting. Occasionally the site can become irritated or infected and may require wound care. While dogs and cats do not appear to have the same problems that people do with bark scorpions, it is possible that small or sensitive pets could have a problem.

Mild reactions include hives and itching, but these reactions can progress to being much more serious. Some pets may have an anaphylactic reaction which is characterized by massive histamine release in the body and can result in shock and collapse. Pets that have a reaction to the venom may need more significant care, which could include hospitalization. While rare, severe anaphylactic reactions to scorpion venom can be fatal. These reactions are medical emergencies and pets should be seen immediately by a veterinarian.

If your pet is stung by a scorpion, but is acting normal, veterinary care may not be necessary. If you are at all concerned however, don't hesitate to call or visit your family veterinarian or Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care. Pets should be watched very closely for 4-6 hours after the sting to make sure they don't have any adverse reaction. Signs to look for may include excessive drooling, abnormal breathing, dilated pupils, difficulty eating or drinking. If your pet has any problems they should be examined by a veterinarian immediately.

