

# JELLYFISH STINGS

## SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

Any or all of the following:

### From tentacles:

(i.e. Box Jellyfish, Bluebottle)

- Visible tentacles stuck on the skin
- Immediate severe pain
- Skin - whip-like weals, red flare, orange peel effect, blotchy, frosted ladder pattern
- Respiratory/cardiac arrest can occur very quickly

### Irukandji syndrome:

- Minor sting site, no tentacles
- 5-40 minutes after the sting - severe generalised pain
- Cramping, nausea, vomiting
- Difficulty breathing, sweating
- Restlessness, a feeling of impending 'doom'
- Serious complications can occur

## First aid depends on:

1. The type of sting, and
2. Where the sting occurred

### Serious incidents occur in the tropical region

Tropical - from Bundaberg (QLD) across the northern coastline, down to Geraldton (WA)



### If casualty stops breathing:

- **Stop treatment**
- **Perform CPR**

## TROPICAL

### PRIORITY - TO PRESERVE LIFE

Remove from water, restrain if necessary  
Resuscitate if required

### VINEGAR FOR 30 SECONDS

Liberal douse the stung area with vinegar

Pick off any remaining tentacles

(not harmful to first aider)

If no vinegar:

Pick off the tentacles, rinse with seawater

### DO NOT APPLY FRESH WATER

(this may cause more stinging)

### APPLY COLD PACK

### SEEK MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

(lifeguard, 000)

## NON-TROPICAL

### PRIORITY - TO RELIEVE PAIN

Do not use vinegar or rub the sting area  
Rest, reassure and monitor

### PICK OFF TENTACLES

### RINSE WITH SEAWATER

### PLACE IN HOT WATER FOR 20 MINUTES

If pain is not relieved by heat or if hot water is not available, use a cold pack

**Ensure Safety  
for Self and Others**

**Dial Triple Zero (000)  
for an Ambulance**



**Box jellyfish** - A large box like bell with multiple very long tentacles (20–30cm). Urgent assistance is required.  
In tropical areas hospitals and ambulances carry anti-venom.



**Irukandji syndrome** - Some small offshore and onshore jellyfish are known to produce an "Irukandji syndrome." These jellyfish have only four tentacles and some are too small to be seen.



**Bluebottle** (Portuguese-Man-of-War)  
Although a tropical jellyfish, if obviously stung by bluebottle, treat as for non-tropical.