JELLYFISH STINGS

Ensure the safety of everyone
Call the ambulance on Triple Zero (000)

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:
- The type of sting, and
- Where in Australia the sting occurred

TROPICAL
PRIORITY - TO PRESERVE LIFE
Remove from water, restrain if necessary
Resuscitate if required

VINEGAR FOR 30 SECONDS
Liberally 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

If casualty stops breathing:
- Stop treatment
- Provide CPR

Serious incidents occur in the tropical region
Tropical - from Bundaberg (QLD) across the northern coastline, down to Geraldton (WA)

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-O-War) Although a tropical jellyfish, if obviously stung by bluebottle, treat as for non-tropical.

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