

# 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

First aid depends on:

- The type of sting, and
- Where in Australia 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**
- **Provide CPR**

## TROPICAL

**PRIORITY - TO PRESERVE LIFE**

Remove from water, restrain if necessary  
Resuscitate if required

**VINEGAR FOR 30 SECONDS**

Liberaly 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



**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.