**CAP health & wellness handout: VENOMOUS SPIDERS**

Spider bites are uncommon in the US as spiders are generally reclusive and nocturnal. There are several species of spiders thought to be harmful to people but only two are of clinical significance. The bites of these spiders are painful, but the effects are largely limited.

**Brown Recluse Spider**

* Many people wrongly believe they have been bitten by Brown Recluse spiders.
* The distribution of this spider is limited to the Deep South and Midwestern states
* There is a violin shaped pattern on the spider
* The spider cannot bite unless pushed against the skin
  + Inside a shoe
  + Crushed against a person's body in bed

**The bite**

* Initially painless
* Becomes red and swollen
* Usually heal in 2-3 weeks with no treatment
* Some wounds become necrotic with a non-healing wound with tissue destruction
* There is no effective medical treatment for the bite

**Yellow Sac Spider**

* The spider has a pale body with black feet
* This is the most common biting spider in US
* Found throughout the US
* Will bite if cornered or threatened
* The bite is harmless

**Hobo Spider**

* Inhabits the Pacific Northwest
* Makes a funnel shaped web
* The bite is painful but harmless to humans

**Brown Widow Spider**

* Bite is painful but harmless to humans
* Very timid and rarely indoors
* Range is Southern US and California

## **Black Widow Spider**

* Found throughout most of continental US and Hawaii
* Spider is not aggressive and only bites in self-defense

**The Bite**

* There will be intense pain at the site of the bite
  + Develops in first 20-60 minutes
* Spasm and pain in major muscle groups are common and can be quite intense
* As the venom is neurotoxic (affecting nerves) the following may occur:
  + Weakness
  + Trembling
  + Nausea or vomiting
  + Fainting
  + Dizziness
* The bite is not life threatening, except to very young and very old.

**Treatment**

* Apply ice locally for pain
* Seek professional medical attention
* Antivenin can promptly control pain