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| C:\Users\Mark Otter\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.Word\OtterAquatics_LogoWhite.jpg | **Marine Stingers** |
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Marine stingers are very common in all Australian waters. They all sting but, mostly, their stings are relatively mild, the pain short-lived and readily treated. The nasties (those that can cause death) are almost always restricted to tropical waters north of the Tropic of Capricorn. Warnings about not swimming in tropical Australian waters in the stinger season (November to May/June) should be heeded.

Below is a description of the marine stingers expected to be found in Australian waters, with their symptoms, their location and their treatment.

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| **Name** | **Description** | **Sting Symptoms** | **Location** | **Treatment** |
| **Common Blubber** (Catostylus) | Mushroom-shaped bell, 5-30cms in diameter. No tentacles but eight fronds hanging underneath | Minor skin irritation | World-wide | Wash with sea water, not fresh water  Apply cold packs for 10 minutes |
| **Snotty** (Cyanea)  Also called Hair Jelly or Lion’s Mane | Bigger than a Blubber (up to 50cms diameter), with a less defined, often yellow-brown bell with a large mop of fine red-brown tentacles | Minor skin burning  Multiple, raised white weals | World-wide | Wash with sea water, not fresh water  Apply cold packs for 10 minutes |
| **Jimble** (Carybdea) | Transparent bell up to 3cms in diameter, four tentacles – one in each corner | Initial pain or itchiness  Small raised white weals surrounded b y bright red swollen area | Australia-wide, but more commonly in SA and WA | Wash with sea water, not fresh water  Apply cold packs for 10 minutes |
| **Bluebottle** (Physalia or Portuguese Man-o-War) | An air-filled sac up to 8cms long with a single blue tentacle up to one metre long | Pain and burning sensation  Single raised white welt with prominent beading  Occasionally difficulty in breathing  May develop into Irukanji syndrome (see below) | Warm oceans world-wide | Remove tentacles  In tropical waters, apply vinegar  In non-tropical waters, wash with sea water, not fresh water, do not rub  Apply hot water – as hot as the patient can stand  Apply cold packs for 10 minutes |
| **Box Jellyfish** (Chironex, Sea Wasp) | Blue translucent cube/bell-shaped with sides up to 20 cms. Up to 15 ribbon-like tentacles from 10cm to 3 metres long | Severe burning pain  Unconsciousness  Burn or whip-like marks  Adherent tentacles  Respiratory arrest which may lead to death | All shallow tropical Australian waters | Seek urgent medical aid (000 or 112)  Commence CPR if necessary  Douse well with vinegar  If no vinegar, remove tentacles and wash with sea water, not fresh water |
| **Irukanji** | Small, transparent box-shaped,1-2 cms in diameter. Normally never seen | Initial sting is often undetected  5-40 mins after sting, the Irukanji-syndrome begins:   * Severe backache * Muscle cramps * Sweating * Nausea * Feeling of impending doom | All tropical Australian waters, including reefs and islands, sometimes in epidemic proportions  Are sometimes found in temperate waters, including Moreton Bay | Seek urgent medical aid (000 or 112)  Douse with vinegar, do not apply fresh water, do not rub, do not apply heat  Rest and reassure  Do not re-enter the water |
| **Morbakka** (Moreton Bay stinger, fire jelly) | Large, fist-sized bell 6-18 cms long. One tentacle in each corner up to 1 metre long | Burning, itching pain  Wide, raised pink welts with surrounding bright red skin flare  Occasionally Irukanji-type symptoms | All tropical Australian waters as well as all Queensland and northern NSW coasts | Douse with vinegar  Apply ice packs for 10 mins |
| **Blue-ringed octopus** | 15-20 cms in length, blue rings on tan body  Envenomation never occurs in water, only when it is removed and handled | Numbness of lips and tongue  Progressive weakness of the breathing muscles  Death from respiratory arrest if basic life support is not administered within 30 minutes | Rock pools around Australia, especially in southern NSW and SA | Seek urgent medical aid (000 or 112)  Apply pressure immobilisation bandage  CPR if necessary |
| **Cone shell** | Pretty white shells with brown spots  Have a harpoon-like tooth at the mouth which delivers venom | Mild to severe pain  Swelling and numbness  Nausea  Weakness and lack of coordination  Disturbed vision, hearing and speech  Progressive weakness of the breathing muscles  Death from respiratory arrest if basic life support is not administered within 30 minutes | Dangerous ones occur in shallow water, sand flats and reefs in Australian tropical regions | Seek urgent medical aid (000 or 112)  Apply pressure immobilisation bandage  CPR if necessary |
| **Stonefish** | 20-30cms long, brown tough warty skin and often slimy with 13 spines on its back. Well camouflaged (looks like a rock) | Immediate severe localised pain  Grey/blue discolouration of skin  Sometimes an open wound  Irrational behaviour and often panic | Tropical waters but are common in Moreton Bay | Place affected part in hot water (as hot as the patient can stand). This is usually the only treatment necessary  Apply ice packs if required  In severe cases, hospital admission may be necessary (antivenene is available) |
| **Lionfish** | Small pretty tropical fish prized as aquarium pets  Dorsal, anal and pelvic spines which transfer venom when handled | Immediate severe localised pain  Grey/blue discolouration of skin  Sometimes an open wound  Irrational behaviour and often panic | Tropical waters | Place affected part in hot water (as hot as the patient can stand). This is usually the only treatment necessary  Apply ice packs if required  If these do not relieve the pain, call 000 |
| **Stingray** | Large flat fish with whip-like barbed tail. They burrow under the sand and are usually difficult to detect until stepped on | Intense pain and swelling  Cut or penetrating wound  Possible embedded barb | World-wide | Place affected part in hot water (as hot as the patient can stand)  Refer to a doctor or hospital as a tetanus injection and antibiotics may be required  If the barb is embedded, it must be removed surgically. |
| **Sea snakes** | Similar to land snakes but with a flattened tail | Drowsiness  Vomiting  Visual disturbance  Weakness  Muscle pain  Breathing difficulties | World-wide with a concentration in Australian northern waters | Seek urgent medical aid (000 or 112)  Apply pressure immobilisation bandage  CPR if necessary |
| **Sea urchins** | Spiny balls of varying sizes often in the cracks of rock pools  Injury usually occurs from stepping on them | Painful puncture wound  Spines broken off in wound | World-wide | Place affected part in hot water (as hot as the patient can stand)  Refer to a doctor or hospital as a tetanus injection and antibiotics may be required  If a barb is embedded, it must be removed surgically. |