



Clinical Practice Guidelines: Toxicology and toxinology/Envenomation – Spider

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Date	January, 2020
Purpose	To ensure a consistent approach to patients who have been exposed to a spider envenomation.
Scope	Applies to Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS) clinical staff.
Health care setting	Pre-hospital assessment and treatment.
Population	Applies to all ages unless stated otherwise.
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Envenomation – Spider

January, 2020

Spider bites are common. There are two important groups of spiders in Australia – funnel web spiders and redback spiders. All other spiders are rarely of any clinical significance.

Funnel-web spiders (Large black spiders)

Funnel-web spider envenomation is rare but potentially lethal.^[1]
All large black spiders should be assumed to be funnel-web spiders.
Funnel-web spiders are found within southern Queensland up to approximately Gladstone and the mountain region near Mossman.^[2]

Redback spiders

Redback spider bites are common, but rarely life-threatening.^[1]
Clinical features can be distressing for the patient and pain can be difficult to manage.

Clinical features



Funnel-web spiders

- Localised severe pain at bite site
- Puncture/fang marks are often visible
- Signs and symptoms of envenomation (may occur within 10 minutes):^[1]
 - **general:** nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, headache
 - **neurological:** muscular spasm, numbness/tingling and fasciculations
 - **autonomic:** diaphoresis, salivation, piloerection, lacrimation, hypertension, tachycardia or bradycardia
 - **cardiovascular:** pulmonary oedema, myocardial injury
 - **central:** agitation, drowsiness, coma

Clinical features (cont.)

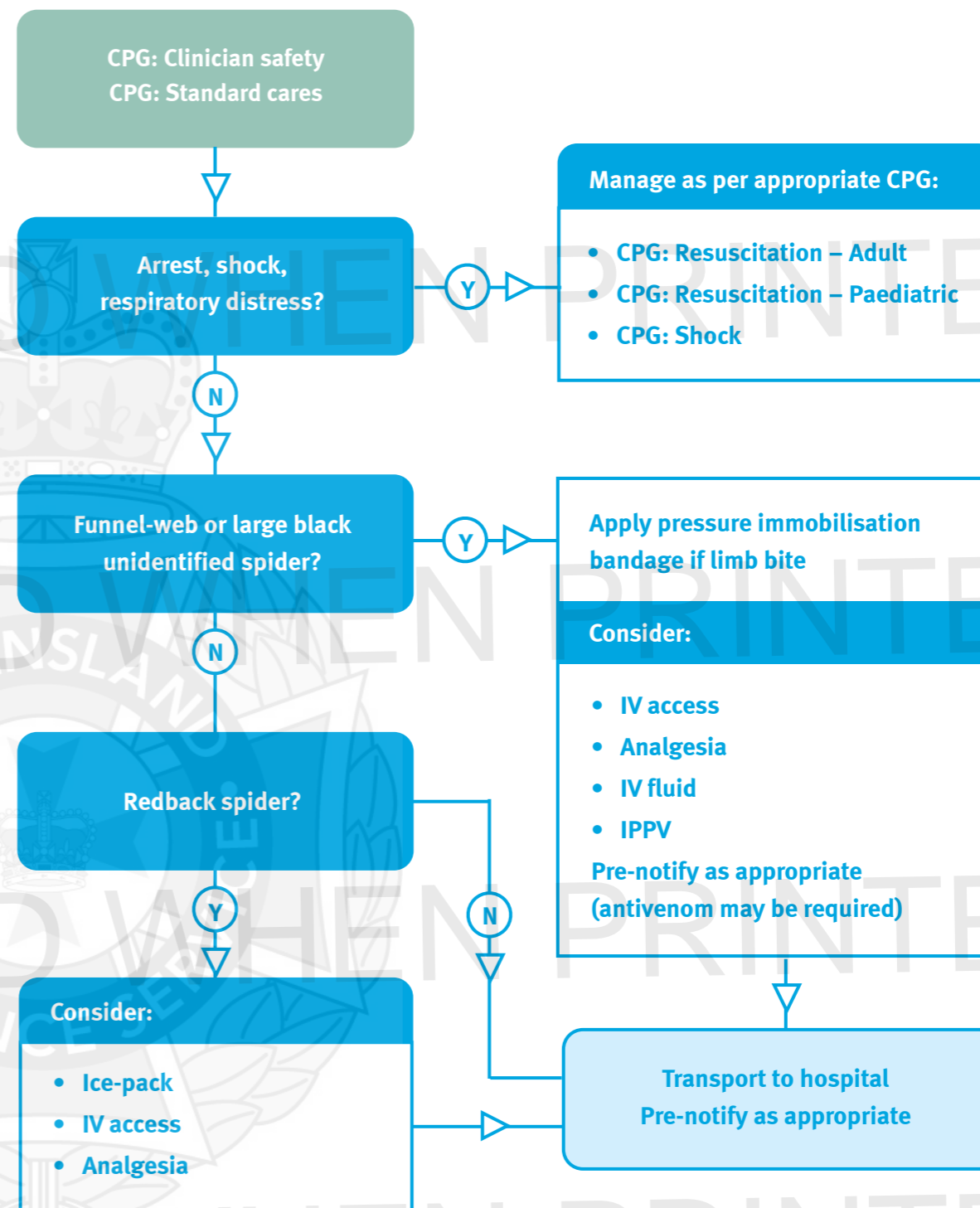


Redback spider

- Local and regional signs and symptoms include:
 - Bites are not initially painful
 - Pain increasing over hours, radiating from the bite site and can last for days
 - Diaphoresis, piloerection (involuntary bristling of hairs)
- Systemic signs and symptoms include:
 - Nausea and vomiting, headache, generalised pain
 - Less commonly: hypertension, agitation, fever, paraesthesia, muscle spasms, priapism

+ Additional information

- Anti-venom is recommended for Funnel Web Spider envenomation. Cases of suspected envenomation should be urgently transported to hospital with appropriate pre-notification.



Note: Clinicians are only to perform procedures for which they have received specific training and authorisation by the QAS.