

## Hazard Alert — First Aid for Widow Spider Bites

There is always a small risk of finding exotic spiders amongst imported products. The health and safety issues associated with this risk must be managed by employers of workers at risk of encountering these pests. Employers, such as product importers and retail outlet managers, must control the hazards to ensure worker safety.

Importation procedures aim to minimise this risk as much as possible, but they are not a guarantee that imported products are pest-free.

If a suspected exotic spider is detected, carefully contain the spider and report the detection to:

**the MAF Hotline: 0800 809 966**

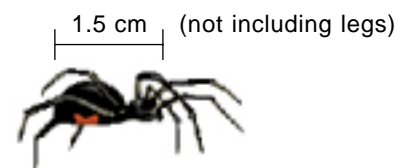
Any spider can bite, but very few present a hazard to human health. Most spiders run away when they are disturbed.

Widow spiders (of the genus *Latrodectus*) are of health concern. They are not aggressive and when they do bite, their bites only sometimes have effects (beyond the unpleasantness of being bitten). In the unlikely event of a person being bitten by a widow spider they should:

- Seek medical attention immediately.
- Clean the wound, if possible, with antiseptic or warm soapy water and place ice on the bite before travelling to the nearest hospital, medical centre or doctor.

- Avoid applying pressure to the wound and not take sedatives or consume alcohol.
- Seek medical advice even if there are no immediate symptoms beyond the 'pin prick' of the bite.
- Attempt to contain/capture the spider (if this can be done safely) in a jar and seal the jar and take it to a medical professional for positive identification. (Fly sprays that claim to work on spiders can be used to stun the spider prior to placing it in the jar.)

### Widow Spiders

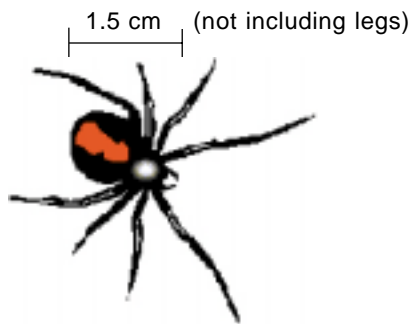


Widow spiders range in size, with a large female achieving a body size of 1.5 cm and the smallest males only measuring about 3 mm.

Black widow spiders are black with a distinctive red hourglass shape on the underside of the abdomen; males have white and red markings on their sides and longer legs than the female.

Brown widow spiders are similar in appearance to female black widows but are a greeny-brown colour.

Australian Redback Spiders are black with the distinctive red hourglass shape on the underside of the abdomen and a red stripe on the back.



If you are uncertain whether a bite is from a widow spider, react as though it is.

For 24-hour poisons advice, phone:

0800 POISON

0800 764766