

Venomous Spider Bites

- There are many species of venomous spiders that reside in North America. These species include brown recluse spiders, black widows, and tarantulas
- The venom from brown recluse spiders contain a variety of enzymes that can cause platelet aggregation and micro clots in the blood (this can lead to localized tissue death and sloughing of the skin)
- The venom from black widow spiders is neurotoxic. Guinea pigs, cats and horses are highly sensitive to this venom (dogs have some amount of resistance to black widow envenomation)

Clinical Signs and Diagnosis

- Clinical Signs of Spider Bites
 - Redness and swelling around the site of the bite
 - A bullseye or target like appearance around the bite
 - Systemic signs are rare, but can include fever, vomiting, muscle cramping, tremors, anemia, and bloody urine
- Diagnosis
 - Diagnosis of a spider bite usually relies heavily on evaluation of clinical signs and symptoms as well as any history provided by the pet parent

Treatment

- Inpatient (Hospitalized Care)
 - Antivenom is not available for most species of spider bites
 - Treatment in clinic may include IV fluids, IV pain medications, sedated wound treatment and debridement
 - Most patients can be released within 1-2 days to be monitored at home
- Outpatient (At Home Care)
 - For less severe spider bites, overnite or daily hospitalization may not be required
 - Oral medications to reduce swelling, pain, and infection will be sent home
 - Monitor pet carefully for any sign of worsening of symptoms

Post Hospitalization Care

- Prevent overactivity for 1-2 weeks while any tissue damaged areas are healing
- Give all medications as prescribed by your veterinarian
- Consider the use of cold laser therapy to reduce pain and swelling and increase healing rate of bite area
- Do not allow pet or other pets to lick, chew, or scratch at bite area as this could lead to secondary infection