



marine stingers

myths and facts

MYTH: Stinger suits provide complete protection.

FACT: They can prevent the majority of stings, but any skin exposed is still at risk. It is also possible to crush stingers through the mesh, but this is unusual. Not all suits are equal, full-body lycra suits offer the best protection.

MYTH: Only people swimming at beaches are at risk of Irukandji stings.

FACT: Everybody who enters tropical waters is potentially at risk, including swimming off a beach, launching a boat, cast netting, snorkelling and diving, whether on the coast, islands or reefs.

MYTH: Anti-venom will save me if I am stung by a box jellyfish.

FACT: Death from a box jellyfish sting typically occurs in 2-5 minutes, whereas the typical response time for the anti-venom to arrive at the scene is 15-20 minutes. Don't risk it, swim inside the nets and wear protective clothing.

MYTH: Vinegar stops the pain of a sting.

FACT: Vinegar deactivates nematocysts (stinging cells) and prevents additional venom from being injected into the skin. Freshwater (hot, cold or melted ice) will cause additional stinger cells to inject more venom.

MYTH: Irukandji are now the most dangerous jellyfish.

FACT: Both Chironex Box Jellyfish and Irukandji are highly venomous animals. Box jellyfish are still regarded as the world's deadliest animal. Only two deaths have been attributed to Irukandji stings. This should be considered relative to the number of deaths each year from drowning or even vehicle accidents.

MYTH: You are safe from stingers when the water is rough.

FACT: Jellyfish are still found in rough waters.

MYTH: Stinger nets protect from all jellyfish.

FACT: Stinger nets are more formally identified as Stinger Resistant Enclosures. They offer a reasonable measure of protection against loss of life from Box Jellyfish, but do not protect against smaller jellyfish including Irukandji or against minor stings from Box Jellyfish or other jellyfish.

MYTH: Locals don't get stung.

FACT: Analysis of patients presenting with stings certainly indicates that locals get stung, especially if ignoring basic safety rules.

MYTH: Only people with pre-existing conditions or allergies are at risk of Irukandji Syndrome.

FACT: The only pre-existing condition that is common to all people who are stung is that they have exposed skin. Irukandji Syndrome is not an allergic reaction, it is a potentially life-threatening illness caused by contact with certain types of jellyfish.



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