

## Spider Bite

Summer of 2016:

This document is just for review, and maybe to retain some useful information. I was determined to document the physical reactions of a serious bite from a Brown Recluse Spider. My health is less than in younger years, but still in good strength and agility from a half century of running and biking, as well as some work related fast and tough physical requirements.

Now at age 63, this summer while sleeping with light partial covering, a bite occurred at 3am and awoke me with a shout from what felt like a stab wound from an ice pick. Instantly the lights were on, and I was looking around for what hit me, and checking the wound. The injury source was quickly deduced as a Spider Bite. I moved the bedding around and saw one large and one smaller Recluse about three feet from the attack area. The spiders were on the carpet against the wall, and about a foot apart. The large one had a 3 inch spread and the smaller over two inches. They were stopped with a fly swatter, and then the whole room was covered in detail with a nozzle vacuum cleaner.

The injury looked like I had been stabbed with a small nail or staple, and it was bleeding enough to require a pinch to stop the flow. I let it bleed for a while, to eliminate some of the possibility of poison. The injury was behind the right knee, just below the inside tendon, where the pulse is seen. The heartbeat sound and vein pulse movement is probably what initially attracted the spider to that location.

In research on Spider Bites, there is a cure for some, including Black Widows, but there is no known cure for Brown Recluse, and they are some times reported to be fatal. The postings said not to bleed it like a snake bite, so my method of treatment was likely the only thing that could be done.

That day, the wound was sore, and I kept my leg actively moving, including a long walk around the park with a friend. The next morning the knee was swollen slightly like a sprain, and sore to move at first, but I worked it out until it was flexible. As long as I walked or kept the leg moving, it felt normal. But if I stood still even long enough to pour and stir a drink, the knee cramped into a forced bending, and felt like a toothache type of sore and increasing pain. My only solution for aid was to keep moving, apply a heat pack, and a patch of clay mud mixed with aspirin and aloe, applied on the bite area. I used plastic wrap from the kitchen, and wrapped all the way around the knee, to hold the mud pack in place. It seemed to work well and feel okay, as long as the leg was kept flexing in motion.

Through the week, the swelling increased and within a few days my foot was swelling too. The soreness was more intense, and after the fourth day, it was painful and difficult to walk upright until the knee was flexed really well. It took about ten minutes of serious workout, to get where I could walk standing straight. Once that was achieved, I could not stop or stand still, or it would start cramping, and the pain would need to be worked out

again. After the fourth or fifth day, the bite area started very slightly to show a change in color, in a spot about the size of a dime around the bite. By then, the leg was well swollen from the knee down. Alternating heat and cold packs were all that seemed to work, and later the leg was getting hot, and required keeping a cool wet cloth around the knee at all times. A dull headache was starting by the end of the week, but not enough to require anything. Only once did I take an aspirin, other than those applied to my clay mud and aloe patch.

After the first week, I had to drive from Kansas to Florida, so that entailed a few stops to flex during the 15 hours of driving time. When I arrived in Florida, I soaked in a hot bath, and honestly; except for a splash in pools, Jacuzzis, or the ocean, this is the first bath I have had in a decade or two, since I always take showers. In Florida through the second week, my leg was swelling from the knee down to where the skin was so tight, I was concerned of scarring from split skin. So I constantly cooled my leg with a wet towel, and kept my foot in a bucket of cool water when sitting. Long walks on the beach were helpful too, walking knee deep in the water for miles, while picking up seashells. I even kept my foot in water, and a wet rag on my leg while sleeping. At the end of the second week the color changes increased quickly, and in one day, it changed from a fist size blue spot, to the whole calf and back of the knee was blue.

By the third week, the swelling went down considerably, but the color spread slightly to the ankle and bottom of my foot. It was a relief when the swelling receded, as the soreness and ache problem dropped away almost as soon as the swelling stopped. There was only the morning soreness, until it was worked out, but the right leg looked bigger than the other, like it belonged to someone else. The beach walks helped, and by the end of the third week, the blueness was going away too. Eventually after a few more weeks, only a small spot on the bite area was brown, about the size of a pea, and an internal scar there felt like I had a BB under my skin.

On the fourth week, I thought it was all over, other than a slight soreness that was noticeable most in the mornings, or after a long walk. This was similar to any other knee ache that lasts a few months after an injury. What occurred then was most unusual, and I have to attribute it to the spider bite. I awoke dreaming that someone dropped something in my throat. It came from my sinus area, and I awoke choking and feeling something large going slowly down to my stomach. It felt like the size of a quarter with corners and angles of a piece of plastic. I could breathe fine, but I could feel it move as each rib of the esophagus expanded one at a time, then it moved one rib, and the next slowly expanded while the rib above contracted, moving the object down further, and so on. It took ten to fifteen minutes to swallow this thing, and nothing like this had happened to me before. Whatever it was, I still do not know, but my sinuses are now clearer than they have been in thirty or more years. I can now breathe easily where there has always been a restriction. I still have allergy problems, but not the blockage that has always been present.

Also on the fourth week, I began to peel skin. I thought that it was from the beach walks of just a bit too much sun. This began on my legs and face, and especially the injured leg. This seemed normal at first, but then my feet, both of them started shedding skin very

deeply several layers at a time. Then my hands started shedding. Eventually my hands and feet shed complete layers of skin, and that included the calluses on my palms and the bottoms of my feet were shed completely. I recall going to the store, and at the checkout, it looked as if I had leprosy, because everywhere on my hands was flakey up to the wrists, and there was not a single spot that was not covered with thick clear/white flakey skin. My nails looked normal, and after the shedding, the skin looked normal, but this was very unusual. Even my armpits, seemed to callus over, and then shed all the skin of several thick layers.

After the fourth or fifth week, all is well, and no further symptoms are noted, other than an occasional slight ache in the knee, and a spot at the bite area. It is my conclusion, even from the beginning, that I was fortunate to have been in good health originally. I was also fortunate as to not have the injury too close to my organs and other more vital areas. Without these fortunes, I see how this bug could easily have been fatal or more-so prone to injure someone as they have often been reported. I thank God for my protection and his teaching and care of my circumstance. May it never happen again, but I take this as another life experience. Please learn from this document and not from similar experiences.

Steven Buren,  
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