

RBS bite symptoms can be distressing but not life threatening. Analgesia is the mainstay of treatment. The role of RBS AV has been questioned.

RBS bite envenoming is a diagnosis based on clinical features and circumstances. RBS envenoming is not life-threatening.

Clinical features:

Local:

- Bite may not be felt initially but can cause increasing pain over minutes to hours, become severe and may last days
- Pain may radiate proximally from affected limb but also generalized to involve abdomen, chest, and back
- Local erythema, sweating & piloerection may be present

Systemic:

- Sweating – unusual distribution such as bilaterally below knees
- Nausea, vomiting, headache, lethargy
- Mild tachycardia and hypertension
- Irritability, agitation, mild fever and priapism are more common in paediatric population (infants may present with undifferentiated pain, irritability and distress).

Duration of symptoms may persist for hours or up to 5 days.

Symptoms rarely persist for greater than 1 week.

Management

Reassure patient as condition is not life threatening.

First Aid:

- Ice-pack to bite site. Do **not** apply pressure bandage and immobilisation

Analgesia

- **Paracetamol** and **ibuprofen**
- If pain not adequately controlled, add an oral opioid
- If ongoing pain despite oral opioid therapy, consider other interventions including parenteral opioids, ketamine, clonidine, Redback Spider (RBS) Antivenom

RBS Antivenom (see separate RBS Antivenom guideline)- discuss with Clinical Toxicologist

- Efficacy has been questioned and use has become controversial.
- A questionable history or atypical clinical features should generally NOT receive RBS AV
- Pain that is adequately controlled with oral analgesics does NOT require RBS AV
- Undertake a shared decision-making approach with the patient when considering use of RBS AV

Risk: < 5% allergic reactions (anaphylaxis is rare); < 10% serum sickness (fever, rash, arthralgia, myalgia) within 14 days. Serum sickness is self-limiting, but prednisolone may ameliorate symptoms.

Benefit: possible earlier resolution of pain; obviate need for parenteral analgesics and reduction in hospital length of stay.