

Things that sting #1.

Tropical Marine Stinger Safety.



Why is tropical marine stinger safety important to you?

The beaches and oceans of tropical Queensland (north of Bundaberg), tropical Western Australia (north of Geraldton) and the Northern Territory are an important part of the natural attraction of these regions. They are home to many interesting animals, including some harmful jellyfish collectively known as marine stingers. These marine stingers are easy to avoid but some of the tropical species can cause life threatening injuries.



Circulation area of tropical marine stingers in Australia

What are tropical marine stingers and what do they look like?

Tropical marine stingers, such as the Irukandji and the Box Jellyfish (*Chironex fleckeri*) are classed as dangerous and caution must be exercised when entering tropical waters during the 'Marine Stinger season', which generally runs from November to March.



above: Box Jellyfish;
left: Irukandji

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How can you best protect yourself against tropical marine stingers?

Some simple rules for safe swimming apply to help reduce the risk of incidents involving marine stingers:



STINGERS
(UNDERWATER)

- Always swim at patrolled beaches, between the red and yellow flags.
- Look for and obey safety signs.
- Don't enter the water when beaches are closed.
- Ask a lifesaver or lifeguard for help and advice if you need it.
- Don't touch marine stingers washed up on the beach, they can still sting you.
- Swim in the stinger nets where provided.
- It is recommended that a full-body lycra suit, or equivalent, be worn to provide a good measure of protection against marine stings, particularly during the stinger season, which generally runs from November to March.
- Enter the water slowly — this gives marine stingers time to move away.

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What should be done if you get a tropical marine sting?

If you are stung, or are with someone else who has been stung, the treatment will vary depending on your location and what type of stinger is involved. In areas where dangerous tropical jellyfish are found and the species causing the sting cannot be clearly identified, it is safer to treat the victim with vinegar.

The treatment is as follows:

- Remove the patient from the water and restrain if necessary.
- Call for help (dial 000 or get a surf lifesaver or lifeguard to help you).

- Assess the patient and commence CPR as necessary.
- Liberally douse the stung area with vinegar to neutralise invisible stinging cells — do not wash with fresh water
- If vinegar is unavailable, pick off any remnants of the tentacles (preferably with gloves) and rinse sting well with seawater (not freshwater).
- Seek medical assistance and transport to the hospital immediately.

For more information, go to www.marinestingers.com.au/safety



To enjoy the beach safely, remember:

FLAGS

Find the red and yellow flags and swim between them.

Look at, understand and obey the safety signs.

Ask a lifeguard or lifesaver for advice before you enter the water.

Get a friend to swim with you.

Stick your hand up, stay calm and call for help if you get into trouble.

