

**MEDIA RELEASE****2 October 2007****Warm water or vinegar first aid for venomous sea creatures**

With summer approaching, more people will be visiting Australian beaches. Coastal waters are the home of several venomous sea creatures that cause stings and other injuries.

Marine injuries or stings are common, but most cause only minor effects and do not require medical treatment.

First aid for injuries caused by sea creatures is discussed in an article by poisons expert Dr Geoffrey Isbister in the October issue of ***Australian Prescriber***.

For most of Australia's beaches, the most common jellyfish is the bluebottle, and a significant proportion of the population has been stung at least once.

Bluebottle stings cause immediate and intense pain at the site which lasts for about an hour or longer in more severe cases. A rash or redness at the sting site may remain for hours or days.

"First aid for bluebottle stings is to first wash them off with seawater, carefully remove the tentacles, and then put the injured area into very warm water or have a hot shower (being careful not to burn the skin by testing the water first)."

For those swimming in northern Australia, box jellyfish are dangerous. Box jellyfish stings can cause rapid envenoming leading to death within 20-30 minutes. "First aid consists of immediately removing any tentacles and generously applying vinegar," Dr Isbister said. "Vinegar deactivates the remaining stinging cells and prevents further envenoming."

Local pain can be treated with ice packs, but may require a pain killer and treatment in hospital.

The full text of this article can be read at [www.australianprescriber.com](http://www.australianprescriber.com)

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