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## Spider and Insect Bites

Little Miss Muffet, sat on a tuffet  
Eating her curds and whey  
Along came a spider, who sat down beside her  
And frightened Miss Muffet away.

Fall General Surgery has recently taken care of three patients with bites consistent with spider bites. Though frequently reported, spider bites in Wisconsin are rare. Two spiders, the Brown Recluse and the Hobo Spider are capable of causing skin, subcutaneous tissue inflammation and localized tissue death. The bite itself is painless and single, not in rows or patches. Redness is soon obvious then induration, blistering and ulceration followed by scab formation. Development of blackness indicates local tissue death.

Systemic symptoms include headache, weakness, dizziness, nausea, lethargy and aching of joints.

Reactions to parasitic arthropods (insects) are lesions most commonly mistaken for spider bites. Other reactions may be caused by fungi, bacteria (staph/strep), Tularemia, Lyme Disease and autoimmune diseases.

Any severe bite should be evaluated (and especially if you are diabetic) promptly by your physician.

Treatment may include antibiotics, steroids, and surgery to the area.

If you see the spider and kill it, bring it with you for identification.

Remember, most, but not all, spiders are harmless and helpful. But if you have a question about a possible bite, seek medical attention.