

BROWN RECLUSE SPIDER SAFETY TIPS

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Although most spiders who share our homes with us are harmless, I must point out one to you that is not. This spider, though uncommon, is the Brown Recluse. The Brown Recluse has a violin shaped marking on the top of the leg bearing section. The Brown Recluse is approximately the size of a dime to a quarter when its legs are extended. My daughter was recently bitten by a Brown Recluse Spider, so I feel I would be remiss to not point out to others the following tips in preventing a Brown Recluse bite.

Lessening the Chances of a Brown Recluse Bite:

- #1- Routinely clean your home, especially vacuum and sweeping.**
- #2- Reduce clutter, especially in your closets, garages, basements and attics, as spiders prefer quiet, undisturbed areas.**
- #3- Move firewood, building materials and debris away from the foundation of your home. Keep shrubs, vines and tree limbs trimmed away from the side of your home. This is a way not to entice spiders to enter your home.**
- #4- Install tight-fitting window screens and door sweeps to keep spiders out. Inspect and clean outside window shutters.**
- #5- Install yellow or sodium vapor light bulbs at outside entrances. They are less attractive to night-flying insects, which help to draw in spiders.**
- #6- Check with a professional about whether or not insecticides should be utilized. I have run across conflicting data. Some sources say to exterminate and other sources say extermination helps to rid your home of the “good” spiders that kill Brown Recluse spiders and that extermination will increase your Brown Recluse population. The sources that speak against extermination also state that since Brown Recluse spiders are reclusive in nature, it is hard to reach them with common insecticides. The sources that speak for extermination state that you must treat the spider directly therefore, in inaccessible or cluttered areas foggers or aerosols will have a better chance of getting the Brown Recluse. In cases of severe infestation of Brown Recluse spiders it is best to call a professional pest control operator.**
- #7- Place glueboards or sticky traps in corners of rooms to capture spiders.**
- #8- Since a Brown Recluse may live indoors and outdoors you should check undisturbed areas with a bright flashlight to help determine the location and extent of infestation.**
- #9- Places to check indoors include: basements, attics, crawl spaces, closets, under/behind furniture, inside shoes, boxes of stored items and between hanging clothes. It should also be pointed out that you should shake out your bed linens before getting into bed at night.**
- #10- Places to check outdoors are barns, utility sheds, woodpiles and underneath lumber, rocks and accumulated debris. To avoid being bitten, wear work gloves when performing your inspection. Removal of clutter is helpful in making areas unattractive to Brown Recluse spiders.**

People are usually bit by a Brown Recluse then they put away an object, such as a shoe and

disturb the spider in their daytime hiding spot, hence the term “Recluse.” Other people are bit when they roll over on a Brown Recluse when it is hunting, during the night, in their bed. With the upcoming cold weather persons may also be bit while carrying in wood.

The bite is usually painless until 3 - 8 hours later when it may become, red, swollen and tender. Most bites later develop into an ulcerous sore ½ - 10 inches in diameter. If you are bitten by what you feel is a Brown Recluse Spider please follow the guidelines listed below:

- #1. Call your physician and follow their directions.**
- #2. If you are able to you should try to collect the spider so it can be identified, as it is sometimes hard to determine if a bite is that of a brown recluse.**

Information for this article was obtained from an article that was written by Mike Potter, Urban Entomologist at University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Department of Entomology. Other information relating to similar topics can be found on their website at www.uky.edu/Agriculture/Entomology.