

# Box jellyfish

Box jellyfish, commonly called stingers in northern Australia, are found from October to May in coastal waters off tropical Australia, from Bundaberg in Queensland to Geraldton in Western Australia. If you visit this area during these months, please take extreme care if swimming.

## Effects of box jellyfish stings

- ◆ Neurotoxic – can cause severe respiratory distress
- ◆ Severe stinging and reddening of skin.

## Signs and symptoms of box jellyfish stings

- ◆ immediate burning pain to the skin
- ◆ savage, multiple whip welts with a frosted ladder pattern in the sting marks
- ◆ adherent tentacles on the skin are usually present
- ◆ irrational behaviour due to pain
- ◆ in major stings there can be:
  - cessation of breathing
  - cardiac arrest.

## Management of box jellyfish stings

- ◆ carefully remove the casualty from the water
- ◆ avoid rubbing the sting area
- ◆ immediately douse the sting area with vinegar for at least 30 seconds
- ◆ if vinegar is not available, carefully remove tentacles off the skin and rinse well with seawater
- ◆ call Triple Zero (000) for an ambulance
- ◆ regularly monitor and record the casualty's pulse and breathing
- ◆ begin resuscitation if necessary
- ◆ anti-venom is available.

**The Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS)  
encourages you to be prepared for an emergency.**

**Enrol in a QAS first aid course to learn vital life-saving first aid skills.**

**Enquire online at [www.ambulance.qld.gov.au](http://www.ambulance.qld.gov.au) or call  
13 QGOV (13 74 68)**

