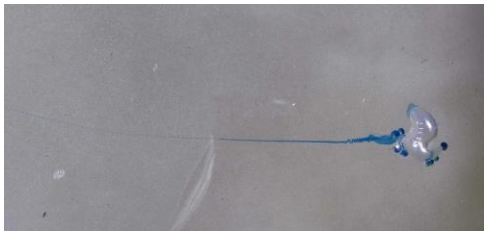
SURF LIFE SAVING
SOUTH AUSTRALIA

BLUEBOTTLE (Physalia)

Quick facts



- Float on the surface with long stinger trailing behind
- The body measures 3 to 15 cm, and the tentacles can range in length from 15cm up to 10 metres!
- Can still sting when washed up on beach
- Usually found in tropical waters

Signs and symptoms of physalia sting:

- Pain and a burning sensation
- Usually a single raised white welt with a prominent 'beading' effect
- Occasionally difficulty breathing

Sting first aid

- Keep the patient at rest and under constant observation.
- Do not allow rubbing of the sting area.
- Pick off any remaining tentacles with fingers (a harmless prickling may be felt).
- Rinse the stung area well with seawater (not freshwater) to remove any invisible stinging cells.

  Do not use vinegar on Physalia stings
- Place the patient's stung area in hot water for 20 minutes (no hotter than the rescuer can comfortably tolerate).
- If the pain is unrelieved by the heat, or if hot water is not available, apply cold packs or wrapped ice.
- Send for medical aid if symptoms persist

A quick note on some things that DON'T work for stings...

- Rubbing sand over the sting (it just gives you a rash around the sting)
- Pouring soft drinks over the sting (just makes it sticky)
- Urinating over the sting (it's just gross, and doesn't work anyway!)

More Information

Visit the www.beachsafe.org.au or the download the Beachsafe App for iOS and Android

Surf Life Saving SA
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