

Lionfish Sting

What you should do

Tim Codling wrote an informative article describing what happened to him, and what you can do right here on Grand Cayman should you get stung by a Lionfish:

What to do for a Lionfish Injury while on a Dive

1. Remain calm. Notify your dive buddy and immediately terminate your dive.
2. Moment of lion fish sting, a diver can immediately start trying to squeeze or "milk" the venom out of stung area. This has helped other divers lessen the amount or distance of the venom spread. The diver can do this while signaling the other divers and while ascending.
3. Ascend slowly, observing all decompression stops, and surface as soon as possible.
4. Remove any foreign material such as spines. Add pressure to the wound to try and squeeze out the venom. Rinse the wound with clean water.
5. Soak wound (30 minutes) in heated, non-scalding, water as soon as possible.

The lion fish venom is protein based and is neutralized by the hot water thus preventing the protein from moving into the blood stream. The hot water is quite effective for controlling the pain.

6. Call 911 as soon as possible. The operators have all been instructed and are familiar with medical protocol. They will immediately initiate preliminary assessment and treatment. As soon as possible, contact marine injury specialists, Dr. Osterloh or Dr. Robertson at the Cayman Clinic **(949-7400)** who will coordinate the medical procedures necessary for a lion fish envenomation.

As most injuries occur to the hands and if there is significant tissue damage, a referral will likely be made to Dr. Tanja Ebanks, a hand specialist, at CTM Hospital (946-0067).

7. If not close to medical care, one could take BENADRYL (Antihistamine) and IBUPROFEN (Motrin or Advil) (Anti inflammatory). Medication will not only reduce the pain but more importantly reduce the swelling that can pressure the arteries, veins, and lymph ducts shut cutting off the bodies vital healing process to the area of the sting. The more swelling that occurs, the greater the wound and skin in the area suffers, turning grey as the swelling persists. The immediate care can dramatically reduce the damage to the affected area.

8. Monitor vitals, circulation, airway, and breathing. People commonly go into shock.

9. Your 911 operator will direct you to the appropriate medical facility. Get there as soon as possible.

10. No lion fish envenomation should ever be underestimated. Pain can be significant and secondary complications much more so. Get them treated to avoid any complications.

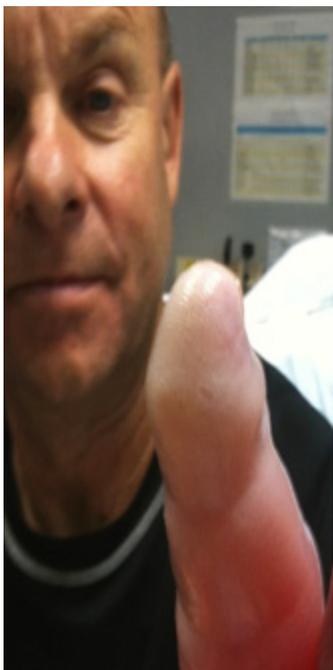
Red Lionfish - Grand Cayman - Nina Baxa



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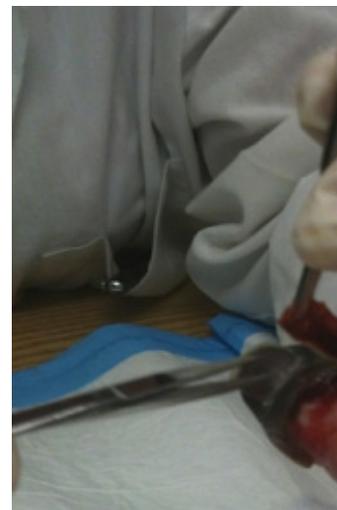
P i c t u r e s

Two hours after Lion Fish Envenomation, in the hospital:



Ultrasound was used to show that there was still good blood-flow to the deeper tissue of the finger and fingertip.

Debriding the dead tissue/skin after initial healing:



Day 42, the day before Tim returned to Canada.

It was almost completely healed over with a very thin layer of new skin which would still take several months to recover, but with full recovery.

Article and Tim's images published with permission of Tim Codling. - Many thanks, Tim.