

Bites, Stings, and Venomous Things

([Wayne Imlach](#))

This is a variant on the standard DW Poison rules.



There is no 'instant death' roll as in the original rules, and a character cannot randomly be immune to a poison; rather, it applies the detrimental effects over time.

Poisons come in five levels of **Toxicity**, with the middle three corresponding to those in the original rules. Each uses a specific die to determine the damage it inflicts.

Very Strong	d8
Strong	d6
Medium	d4
Weak	d3
Very Weak	d2

Each poison also has a **Rapidity** that determines how quickly and frequently the effects are applied. Some, like the venom of creatures, may take effect within seconds or minutes. Other poisons may take hours or even days to harm the victim.

At the end of each rapidity period (be it rounds, minutes, hours or longer), the poison inflicts an amount of damage as indicated by the associated die roll. If the highest value possible on the die is rolled (i.e. a 6 on a d6, an 8 on a d8, etc.), then after inflicting the damage indicated the poison runs its course and is neutralised. Otherwise, damage continues to be applied at the end of each subsequent rapidity period.

If a character is poisoned several times in a row with the same poison, such as being bitten or stung multiple times, they do not take any additional damage – they are simply either poisoned or not. If unlucky enough to be injected with different poisons, however, they are treated separately and damage is inflicted by each.

In the case of being continuously exposed (such as breathing poisoned air) rolling the highest value on the damage die does not neutralise the poison as long as exposure continues.

Rapidity

This determines how quickly the poison starts to affect the victim, how frequently the damage is

applied, and how long before recovery occurs. Most creatures have fast-acting venom, so a poisoned bite or sting will run its course over a few rounds. Other types of poison may take longer to work through the victim's system, with a few insidious types causing harm over the course of several days. The categories listed below are just the most commonly encountered – feel free to create any rapidity that fits the poison being created.

Fast – the effects of the poison are applied at the end of each round. **Normal** – the effects are applied at the end of each minute (10 rounds). **Slow** – the effects are applied at the end of each hour.

Damage Types

A poison may damage characteristics other than Health Points (such as Strength or Intelligence) or inflict damage on several characteristics simultaneously.

Lethal -- damage is applied to Health Points and will kill a character if this brings them to –3 HP or lower.

The following damage types are applied to characteristics. These can temporarily fall below 3 (and even into negative scores) for the purposes of tracking the poison's progress but will return to normal over time.

Paralysing -- damage is applied to Reflexes. If Reflexes falls below 3, the victim is paralysed and cannot move or speak, though they remain conscious.

Weakening -- damage is applied to Strength. If Strength falls below 3, the victim is enfeebled and can barely move. They can still talk slowly and look around but cannot perform any significant physical actions (including the gestures required for arcane spellcasting).

Movement is reduced to a pitiful 1m crawl per combat round.

Consciousness -- damage is applied to Psychic Talent. If it falls below 3, the victim falls unconscious. They roll once each hour to regain consciousness (1 on a d6), though should Psychic Talent return to 3 or greater, the roll is made each minute instead.

Madness -- damage is applied to Intelligence. If it falls to below 3, the victim suffers a Madness as detailed in the Dragon Warriors rulebook. Poisons of this type will inflict very specific forms of Madness on the victim. The Madness will pass once the character's Intelligence returns to 3 or greater.

Disfiguring -- damage is applied to Looks, and represents rashes, swelling and other changes in the skin and body caused by the poison. Looks can also be used if the poison affects a sense such as sight or hearing. In this case if it falls to below 3, the sense is disabled (blindness, deafness, etc.).

Once a poison has run its course and is no longer present in the victim, damage to Health Points recovers at the normal healing rate. Damage to characteristics is typically restored at the same rate as the poison's Rapidity, unless an alternative recovery duration is more appropriate.

Common Poisons

These replace the poison rules in the relevant entries, and list Toxicity, Rapidity, and Types (in that order):

- **Assassin's Lotion** – Medium, Fast, Lethal
- **Sorcerer's Poison** – Medium, any Rapidity, any one Damage Type
- **Barghest** – Medium, Fast, Lethal (when bitten, roll equal to or less than Psychic Talent on 3d6 to ignore the effects of the poison – it is immediately neutralised)
- **Basilisk** – Weak, Fast, Lethal
- **Bee Swarm** – Very Weak, Fast, Lethal
- **Cloudspider** – Strong, Fast, Lethal & Paralysis
- **Giant Scorpion** – Strong, Fast, Lethal
- **Giant Spider** – Medium, Fast, Lethal & Paralysis
- **Giant Viper** – Strong, Fast, Lethal
- **Gorgon Tresses** – Medium, Fast, Lethal
- **Hellhound** – Strong, Normal, Lethal
- **Hydra Bite** – Weak, Normal, Lethal
- **Hydra Vapour** – Medium (Weak if filtered), Normal, Lethal
- **Manticore** – Strong, Fast, Lethal
- **Necrochor Scorpions** – Strong, Fast, Lethal
- **Oni Breath** – Strong, Fast, Madness (Acute Amnesia)
- **Poisonous Spider** – Very Weak, Normal or Slow, Lethal
- **Water Leaper** – Medium, Fast, Lethal
- **Winged Snake** – Strong, Fast, Lethal
- **Wyvern** – Strong, Fast, Lethal (Permanent: every time a 1 is rolled for damage, the character loses that Health Point permanently!)

Antidote Spell

This immediately reduces the Toxicity of any poison in the victim's system by two steps, and completely neutralises Weak and Very Weak poisons. Unlike the original spell, it can be applied at any time the poison is still active.

This article first appeared in [Casket of Fays Issue 9](#).

From:

<https://redruin.org/wiki/> - Red Ruin Wiki

Permanent link:

https://redruin.org/wiki/doku.php?id=miscellanea:bites_stings_and_venomous_things&rev=1701975064

Last update: 2023/12/07 18:51

