



Sting stab strike!

Marine stingers

What do they look like? There are many jellyfish that can give you a very painful sting, but there are only two in Australian waters that can kill you. These are the box jellyfish and the irukandji. The box jellyfish is a large, almost transparent jellyfish with a box-shaped body and many ribbon-like tentacles (up to 15 from each corner) that grows up to 3 metres in length. In contrast, the irukandji is very small (only 1-2 centimetres in diameter) with only four tentacles (one from each corner of its body).

Where do they live? Dangerous marine stingers mostly live in tropical waters north of Agnes Water Queensland, all Northern Territory waters and in Western Australia, south to Exmouth. Sometimes they can be found further south in Moreton Bay, Fraser Island, Sydney and Melbourne.

Why are they dangerous? Their tentacles are covered with stinging cells which release deadly venom. The box jellyfish is widely regarded as the world's most venomous animal because it can kill an adult human in under 3 minutes. You might not notice an irukandji sting at first, but over time it will make you very sick which can lead to death.

How to avoid them. Always swim between the red and yellow flags. Look for and obey safety signs. Do not enter the water when beaches are closed. In tropical waters, also swim in stinger nets and wear full-body lycra body suits.

What to do if you get hurt. Call 000 immediately, provide CPR if required and pour vinegar all over the stung area.

To learn more about other types of marine stingers, visit www.marinestingers.com

