

## WHAT SHOULD WE DO WHEN FINDING JELLYFISH IN THE WATER?

### • DON'T GET INTO THE WATER

- Avoid the areas where the waves break against the shoreline, for they can hold rests and parts of jellyfish with full stinging power.
- Don't touch dead jellies on the beach. They can keep part of their stinging capacity for over 24 hours.
- Don't swim underwater in the presence of jellyfish. Some of them may have very long tentacles difficult to see.

### DON'T EVER TOUCH A JELLYFISH, DEAD OR ALIVE

- If you are already in the water and notice their presence, you should get out immediately and slowly, without shaking the water. Brisk movements will attract the tentacles towards you.

If you happen to have a jellyfish ready to touch you, you should smoothly move it away by pushing its umbrella aside with the open palm of the hand. The umbrella is the part of the jellyfish with less stinging cells.

If you take jellyfish with the aid of a fishing-net, avoid getting it fragmented

### SUN PROTECTION CREAM AND COVERING THE BODY WITH LIGHT CLOTHES CAN PROTECT AGAINST THE STINGS.

## JELLYFISH WARNING FLAG ON THE BEACH



Together with the yellow flag, it acts as a warning. Together with the red flag, it states that bath is forbidden.

In case the warning flag is not raised, warn the baywatch to do so. If there is no baywatch, inform the bathers.

### To inform:

If you detect many jellies near the shore, the Emergency Service of the Balearic Islands (SEIB) should be immediately informed by calling 112.

### To be informed:

You can call 112 (SEIB) or the Centre of environmental Information (Punt d'Informació Ambiental -PIA-) 900 15 16 17

## WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IN CASE YOU GOT STUNG BY A JELLYFISH?

- Get slowly out of the water
- If there are lifeguards, they will know what to do
- Don't rub nor scratch the affected area. Handkerchieves, towels, or even the sand should be avoided.

### IN CASE OF NON SERIOUS JELLYFISH STINGS

- Clean the area with salt water or with a physiological saline solution. DON'T USE FRESH WATER UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCE!
  - Remove any part of the jellyfish attached to the skin by using tweezers or gloves, but never with your fingers!
  - Don't use vinegar, urine, or ammonia. They may be useful against the stings of some species, but might have strong negative effects with others.
  - Apply cold to the affected area for periods of 15-20 minutes. Cover the sting with a bag or a cloth which may prevent the ice from touching the wound. Coldness degrades the toxin and eases the pain and the burning sensation.
  - Apply an antiseptic product 3 or 4 times a day to prevent the wound from getting infected, until it finally heals.
  - Beyond initial first aid, antihistamines or anti-inflammatories of local action can be used (Pregnant women should not take them without a doctor's prescription).
- In order to avoid the pain, an analgesic could be taken.

### IN CASE OF SERIOUS JELLYFISH STINGS OR OF A WORSENING OF THE STING.

- Get to the closest medical centre as soon as possible.

In case of doubt, call 061 - Centre for medical attention of the Balearic Government (Servei d'Atenció Mèdica de la Conselleria de Salut i Consum).

### THE MOST COMMON SYMPTOMS ARE THE FOLLOWING:

- Slight itching
- Burning sensation and a more intense pain
- Feeling of general discomfort or uneasiness
- Blisters and skin marks

### IN THE MOST SERIOUS CASES:

- Headache
- Cramps and vomits
- Breath and cardiovascular problems

## JELLYFISH STINGS

There is nothing exceptional in being stung by a jellyfish. During the spring and the summer time, the most favourable conditions for their thriving (winds, sea currents, water temperature, nourishment...) impel them towards the coast. Thus, it becomes easy to come across them while bathing or undertaking aquatic activities.

### Why do they sting?

**THE STING IS THE MEANS USED BY JELLYFISH TO DEFEND THEMSELVES AGAINST PREDATORS AND ALSO TO OBTAIN THEIR PREY.**

The cause of the sting lies on some thousands of specialized cells spread all over the body of the jellyfish, and especially on its tentacles. These cells contain a toxic substance which is injected through extremely fine filaments armed with harpoon-like spines. When something touches them their venom is triggered through the skin causing paralysis or death to the small animals they feed on and very unpleasant sensations on the person who touches them

### Why do they sting us?

The sting system activates immediately with the slightest of rubs.

**JELLYFISH DO NOT ATTACK, WE JUST HAPPEN TO COME ACROSS THEM.**



Govern de les Illes Balears



## HIGH RISK

The venom of these species is rather active and can cause different reactions ranging from slight hives to an intense burning sensation and pain. People with strong allergic reactions can feel nauseous or suffer from cramps and breathing difficulties.

★ **PURPLESTRIPPED JELLYFISH**  
*Pelagia noctiluca*  
5-10 cm.

It is the origin of the great majority of stings taking place in the Balearic beaches. It is especially dangerous because of its long, almost invisible tentacles charged with venom. It is the most frequent jellyfish in this area.

★ **SEA NETTLE JELLYFISH**  
*Chrysaora*  
30 cm.  
Rare. Its presence is very scarce in these waters

★ **SPARKLING OLINDIAS JELLYFISH**  
*Olindias*  
4-6 cm.  
Common and frequent.

## VERY HIGH RISK

The venom produced by these species is very powerful and, besides of that, they have a great number of stinging cells on their long tentacles. They can cause serious disorders if the person is especially sensitive. It is highly recommended to be assisted by medical staff as soon as possible. So far, no cases of this kind of sting have been reported in the Balearic Islands.

★ **PORTUGUESE MAN-OF-WAR JELLYFISH**  
*Physalia*  
12 cm.  
Very occasional appearance

This species comes from the Atlantic Ocean and its presence in the Mediterranean Sea is merely incidental.

# Do all jellyfish share the same level of danger?

Each species has its own characteristics. It is for that reason that it is so important to know and to be able to identify them. Only then shall we be able to know what to do in case we come across a jellyfish or in case we get stung by one of them.

The seriousness of the sting depends on:

- **The species:** Venom composition and power. Quality of the stinging cells.
- **The person:** Age (old people and young children are especially vulnerable), health condition, weight and body volume in relation with the injured surface. Whether the person is especially sensitive to allergies or whether he or she has been previously stung and has got sensitized is also to be taken into account.
- **The circumstances:** Part of the body affected by the sting, duration of the contact with the jellyfish and number of jellyfish involved.

Only some tropical and Atlantic species can cause serious affections in especially sensitive persons.

In the Mediterranean Sea most of the species are not dangerous for the human being. However, some of them may cause annoying and painful enough reactions as to take them into account.

NOT EVERYBODY SHARES THE SAME DEGREE OF VULNERABILITY AGAINST JELLYFISH STINGS.

★ HIGH RISK  
■ LOW RISK

## NO RISK AT ALL

The effect of the venom produced by these species is so scarcely toxic that they are considered to be harmless against people.

■ **MOON JELLYFISH**  
*Aurelia*  
18 cm.  
Ample and frequent presence

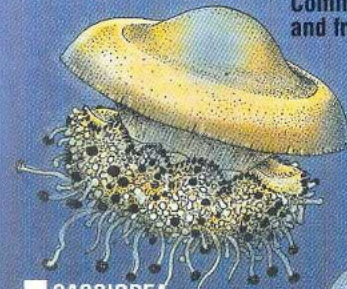


■ **BY-THE-WIND-SAILOR JELLYFISH**  
*Velella*  
6 cm.  
Common and frequent

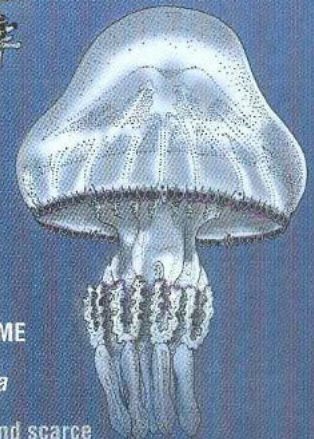
## LOW RISK

These are species with slightly irritant venom. They have only a few short tentacles with scarce stinging cells. Only especially sensitized people may suffer from a slight irritation in the skin and from a burning sensation.

■ **CRYSTAL JELLY**  
*Aequorea*  
18-30 cm.  
Common and frequent



■ **CASSIOPEA JELLYFISH**  
*Cotylorhiza*  
20-35 cm.  
Very common and very frequent



■ **RHIZOSTOME JELLYFISH**  
*Rhizostoma*  
10-70 cm.  
Common and scarce