



Sandfly - Why does a sandfly bite?

Fact

- The female sandfly bites because it uses your blood to help it produce eggs.
- She uses her sucking mouthparts to make a pool of blood on your skin that she sucks up.
- She injects a chemical called histamine into you to stop your blood from clotting and it's the histamine that makes you itchy.

Do you know

- A sandfly is a very small black flying insect and it has a humped back.
- The male sandfly doesn't bite.
- Your blood can help to make up to 100 eggs.
- Female sandflies lay their eggs under stones or plants in flowing water – like rivers.
- There are about 11 different species of sandfly in New Zealand.
- Most sandflies will bite any warm-blooded animal and one species attacks penguins.
- Sandflies feed on nectar.

Experiments you can do

Next time your being attacked by a sandfly sit very still and see if you can have a good look at it close up. Can you see its humped back? How about its six tiny legs?
Are you anywhere near sand? Sand flies don't need to be near sand – you'll find them just about anywhere near running water.

Other Investigations

Find out about Mosquito's. They're bloodsuckers like sandflies.

Which bite – the male or the female?

Do they make a sound?

What do they use the blood for?