

Insect Bites – “I’ll never travel in a third-world country without this clay.”

In 2005 I decided to take a visit to Tiruvannamalai. A good friend of mine had lived there for several years, and he said that a friend of his who still lived there could arrange for a room for my stay. I contacted this man and he arranged the room, which was a nice upstairs flat in the house of a retired college professor. A couple of things, however, were to lead to some unexpected consequences: rain and my deep sleeping. It turned out that that year the all-time record for rainfall in Tamil Nadu had taken place for several months prior to my arrival. I later learned so much rain had fallen in Chennai, that for the first time in its history the *Hindu* newspaper had not been printed because the presses were under water! Little did I know that the rain had also made an impression in the flat and there were now some insects present. I have always been a deep sleeper, and when I arrived I crashed like an elephant; I must have slept for a day straight. But when I awoke I knew something was not okay. In a number of places on my chest and under my arms there were painful burning marks. It was clear I had been bitten by some insect or other.

Within a day the marks had swollen to the size of golf balls, and within two days they were black in colour. And God were they painful! I immediately went to a local doctor, who gave me some antibiotics and also a topical salve, as well as an injection for the pain.

Two days later, I ran into the man who had arranged for the room. He asked how I was doing and I told him what had happened. He was very apologetic, but I said it wasn't his fault that something so unexpected had happened. He asked to see where I had been bitten. I said, "Are you sure?" He looked puzzled, until I open my shirt and he saw the shape I was in. He was speechless and his jaw dropped! He did mention, however, that he had some healing clay that could help. I declined the offer and said that I was being treated by a doctor.

A month later and I was desperate. I was about to take a two-day train trip to North India and I was in the same shape as ever. I contacted the man with the clay, and this time, I said I was willing to try anything. He gave me the clay powder and told me to make a paste of it (gelled clay) and cover the sores and then put some tissue paper over the clay and a slight coating of clay on the tissue and let the whole thing dry and leave it there.

I followed the instructions, and the relief was practically instantaneous. The feeling of the soothing, cooling power of the clay was so pronounced, I was actually caught off guard, and a few minutes later found myself searching by habit for the old painful burning sensations. But there was no doubt: they were gone! By the time I completed the two-day train trip the sores were half their original size. I continued to apply the clay topically and within a week they had disappeared completely – and without even a mark as to where they had been!

I emailed the "clay man" to tell him the results, and also state emphatically that "I will never travel again in a third-world country without this clay."

John S.