

# CITY OF CORONADO LIFEGUARD SERVICE

## STING RAY & JELLYFISH FIRST AID

### **ROUND STING RAY** (*Urolophus halleri*)

There are four species of sting ray in California coastal waters, but the one most common and most likely to be encountered by lifeguards and the public is the round ray. The round ray reaches a maximum length of 20 inches and has one or more serrated spines with a venom gland located in the tail. Injuries normally occur when the victim steps on the animal which anchors it to the bottom and provokes the stinging stabbing reflex. Sometimes you may avoid being stung by shuffling your feet to scare away the sting ray.

### **FIRST AID (Sting rays)**

You have been stung by a venom that causes immediate pain. The first aid treatment is to immediately clean the wound thoroughly and have the victim place the affected part into water that is as hot as he or she can tolerate without burning the skin (105°-110° the temp. of a hot Jacuzzi). Feel the water with your hand to test the temperature. Relief from the pain should occur quickly and last as long as the water is kept hot. It normally takes at least 30 minutes to neutralize the venom. If the victim displays signs of shock or any other adverse reactions to the sting, you should call 911.

When the pain is relieved, dry the wound and bandage. It is advised that you go to a doctor to have the wound professionally cleaned. If the tissue around the wound becomes red, inflamed or painful see a doctor immediately. Dirty wounds heal slowly and may become infected. **Infection is the biggest danger.**



Round Sting Ray



Jellyfish

### **JELLYFISH** (*Chrysaora melanaster*)

Chrysaora has a gelatinous brown and purple bell shape, which holds about 30 feet or so of tentacles. The animal will drift with the currents and wind until it reaches the shore. The stinging cells, called nematocysts, are found all along the tentacles and are active even when washed up to dry land. The nematocyst are actually microscopic darts that will penetrate the skin and inject the venom when touched.

### **FIRST AID (Jellyfish)**

There are a lot of misconceptions about the proper treatment for jellyfish stings. Recent studies have shown that certain remedies such as meat tenderizer, urine, alcohol, and rubbing the affected area in sand are all ineffective at best and most actually aggravate the injury. The only common remedy that will prevent the nematocysts from firing is vinegar, found at any grocery store. In the absence of vinegar, the tentacles should be removed by hand and then the affected area rinsed with water. Normally, the affected area will have a line of small reddish bumps that correspond to where the tentacle contacted the skin. Other symptoms may include pain and/or itching at the affected location. Application of a cooling agent like ice may give some temporary relief to the pain. If the victim displays signs of shock or any other adverse reactions to the sting, you should call 911.