



How to Prevent or Respond to a Snake Bite

After a natural disaster, snakes may have been forced from their natural habitats and move into areas where they would not normally be seen or expected. When you return to your home, be cautious of snakes that may have sought shelter in your home. If you see a snake in your home, immediately call the animal control agency in your county.

How to Prevent Snake Bites

- Be aware of snakes that may be swimming in the water to get to higher ground and those that may be hiding under debris or other objects.
- If you see a snake, back away from it slowly and do not touch it.

Signs of Snake Bites

If you have to walk in high water, you may feel a bite, but not know that you were bitten by a snake. You may think it is another kind of bite or scratch. Pay attention to the following snake bite signs.

Depending on the type of snake, the signs and symptoms may include:

- A pair of puncture marks at the wound
- Redness and swelling around the bite
- Severe pain at the site of the bite
- Nausea and vomiting
- Labored breathing (in extreme cases, breathing may stop altogether)
- Disturbed vision
- Increased salivation and sweating
- Numbness or tingling around your face and/or limbs

What To DO if You or Someone Else is Bitten by a Snake.

- If you or someone you know are bitten, try to see and remember the color and shape of the snake, which can help with treatment of the snake bite.
- Keep the bitten person still and calm. This can slow down the spread of venom if the snake is poisonous.
- Seek medical attention as soon as possible.
- Dial 911 or call local Emergency Medical Services (EMS).
- Apply first aid if you cannot get the person to the hospital right away.
 - Lay or sit the person down with the bite below the level of the heart.
 - Tell him/her to stay calm and still.
 - Cover the bite with a clean, dry dressing.

How to Prevent or Respond to a Snake Bite

(continued from previous page)

What NOT To Do if You or Someone Else is Bitten by a Snake

- Do not pick up the snake or try to trap it (this may put you or someone else at risk for a bite).
- Do not apply a tourniquet.
- Do not slash the wound with a knife.
- Do not suck out the venom.
- Do not apply ice or immerse the wound in water.
- Do not drink alcohol as a pain killer.
- Do not drink caffeinated beverages.

For more information, visit www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters,
or call CDC at 800-CDC-INFO (English and Spanish) or 888-232-6348 (TTY).

September 2, 2005

Page 2 of 2