



Snake Bite Prevention

How to Prevent Snake Bites

What is the Problem?

In the United States, approximately 7,000-8,000 people are bitten by venomous snakes per year, but only 5 of these people died from the snakebite.¹ The number of deaths would be much higher if people did not seek medical care.² It is vitally important for those spending time outdoors to understand their risk of exposure to venomous snakes, how they can prevent and protect themselves from snake bites, and what they should do if they are bitten.³



Prevention Tips⁴

Coral Snakes, Rattlesnakes, Copperheads, and Cottonmouths/Water Moccasins are the main types of venomous snakes. Venomous snakes are found throughout the United States. To prevent snake bites:

- Never try to handle a snake.
- Stay away from tall grass and piles of leaves when possible.
- Avoid climbing on rocks or piles of wood where a snake may be hiding.
- Wear boots and long pants when working outdoors.
- Wear leather gloves when handling brush and/or debris.

What if a Snake Bites You?⁵

- Stay calm and lift your bitten arm or leg so it is level with your heart.
- Take off jewelry or tight clothing near the bite quickly as swelling will begin immediately.
- Clean the bite wound by wiping AWAY from the wound.
- If you believe the bite was from a poisonous snake, get to a hospital as soon as you can. In most of the United States, you should have time to seek medical help before the bite is a serious danger to your life.
- Do NOT bleed the wound.
- Do NOT try to suck the venom out of the wound and do NOT put ice on the bite.



Plan of the Week (POW):

It is important for those spending time outdoors to understand their risk of exposure to venomous snakes, how they can prevent and protect themselves from snake bites, and what they should do if they are bitten.⁶ **ALWAYS** wear boots and long pants when working outdoors and avoid areas where snakes may live (e.g. tall grass, brush, fallen logs, swamps, marshes, etc.).⁷ **NEVER** try to handle a snake⁸. If bitten by a snake **NEVER** bleed the wound, suck the venom out of the wound, or put ice on the bite.⁹

References

- 1-4, 6, 8 Venomous Snakes. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/snakes/>. Updated 24 Feb 2012. Accessed 14 May 2013.
- 5, 7, 9 Snakebite Prevention and First Aid. American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP).
<http://www.aafp.org/afp/2002/0401/p1377.html>. 2002. Accessed 14 May 2013.

NMCPHC Injury Prevention and Violence Free Living Webpage

<http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/health-promotion/injury-violence-free-living/Pages/injury-violence-free-living.aspx>

Add Local Information/Logos Here