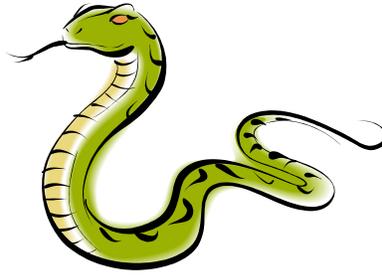


BIRMINGHAM-SOUTHERN COLLEGE CAMPUS POLICE



The information on snakes below is not meant to alarm the public. Snakebites are extremely rare in occurrence and respond well to treatment.

Snake Bite Prevention Tips:

- Leave snakes alone.
- Do not leave food out doors. (Food left out for dogs or cats can attract rodents, which are a source of food for snakes.)
- Many people are bitten because they try to kill a snake or get too close to it.
- Stay out of tall grass unless you wear thick leather boots and remain on hiking paths as much as possible.
- Be cautious after dark. Snakes are active during the evening hours.
- Ropell and other chemical treatments can make a barrier that will repel snakes in small areas such as a small yard. Such products are only a short-term solution.
- Keep hands and feet out of areas you cannot see. Do not pick up rocks or firewood unless you are out of a snake's striking distance.
- Be cautious and alert when climbing rocks.

What snakes cause poisonous bites?

Any of the following "pit viper" snakes cause poisonous bites:

- Rattlesnake
- Copperhead
- Cottonmouth Water Moccasin
- Coral Snake

Treatment

Call for emergency assistance immediately if someone has been bitten by a snake. Responding quickly in this type of emergency is crucial. While waiting for emergency assistance:

- Wash the bite with soap and water.
- Immobilize the bitten area and keep it lower than the heart.
- Cover the area with a clean, cool compress or a moist dressing to minimize swelling and discomfort.
- Monitor vital signs.

If a victim is unable to reach medical care within 30 minutes, the American Red Cross recommends:

- Apply a bandage, wrapped two to four inches above the bite, to help slow the venom. This should not cut off the flow of blood from a vein or artery – the band should be loose enough to slip a finger under it.
- A suction device can be placed over the bite to help draw venom out of the wound without making cuts. These devices are often included in commercial snakebite kits.

This content was last reviewed by a University of Maryland Medicine expert on May 2, 2003.

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