

Prevention of Snake Bites

Snake bites can be prevented in many cases. Refrain from approaching or handling snakes in the wild. Avoid areas of tall grass and piled leaves, as well as rock and woodpiles. These are typical places in which snakes like to hide.

When working outside where snakes may be present, wear tall boots, long pants, and leather gloves. Avoid working outside during the night and in warmer weather, which is when snakes are most active.

It is essential to get a victim of a snake bite to a medical facility for emergency treatment as quickly as possible. However, there are some tips that you should also keep in mind:

- Call 911 immediately.
- Keep the victim calm and still. **Movement can cause the venom to move more quickly through the body.** Consider making a splint to restrict the movement of the affected area.
- Remove constricting clothing or jewelry. The area of the bite will likely swell, so it is important to remove these items quickly.
- Carry or transport the victim by vehicle. This person should not be allowed to walk.
- If the snake is dead, take it with you for identification. Do not waste time hunting it down, though.

There are also several outdated first aid techniques that are now believed to be unhelpful or even harmful. **Do not do any of the following:**

- Do not use a tourniquet.
- Do not cut into the snake bite.
- Do not use a cold compress on the bite.
- Do not give the victim any medications unless directed by a doctor.
- Do not raise the area of the bite above the victim's heart.
- Do not attempt to suck the venom out by mouth ([CDC, 2012](#)).
- Do not use a pump suction device. While these devices were formerly recommended for pumping out snake venom, it is now believed that they are more likely to do harm than good.



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