



Snake Bite

This information could save your or your child's life. The steps you take immediately after recognising a snake bite, could determine the difference between survival or otherwise long term injury or death.

If you or your child are bitten by one of Melbourne's venomous snakes, it is critical that you take the following steps.

Do NOT

- Do NOT suck out the venom or try to wash the bite site. Hospitals are able to test the bite site (if left alone) to determine what snake bit you and the type of anti-venom required for treatment. If you interfere with the site, this could prolong the time taken for diagnosis.
- Do NOT tourniquet the affected limb. This could actually increase your risks associated with the snake venom.
- Do NOT panic. While easier said than done, this would increase your heart rate and body activity which will in turn, promote the flow of venom through your system.
- Do NOT try to catch or kill the snake yourself. If you do this, you are more likely to get bitten again and also you are breaking the law. The hospital does NOT need you to bring in the snake or identify it for them.
- Do NOT assume the snake is harmless. All snakes endemic to Melbourne are venomous.
- Do NOT assume it is a "dry bite". Sometimes this can occur but it is more likely that you have been envenomated. Let the hospital tell you if it is a dry bite or not.

Do

- Immediately back away from the snake. If you move back and out of striking range, it

is less likely to bite you again. Snakes do NOT chase you so once you move away you should be fine to get assistance.

- Move all other persons and animals away from the area to reduce risks to others. If a responsible adult can watch the snake from a safe distance away, this is good but not necessary.
- Immediately call 000 or (112 from a mobile) and follow their instructions. Disregard anything you heard your friend or relative say because that individual most likely heard it from somewhere else. Only seek advice from a trained medical professional. See below for my qualifications.
- Also call your local snake catcher to catch the snake to reduce risks to others. Follow their advice on the phone until they arrive.
- Apply a pressure bandage to the bite site and up the affected limb attempting to cover all areas of the limb. If you run out of bandage, use a second one.
- Try to remain as calm and still as possible. The faster you breathe and the more you move, the more quickly the venom will spread. Attempt to slow down your breathing. Your breathing has a direct relationship with your heart rate and slowing of the breath and reduce your heart rate.



First Aid



by Mark ("Snake Hunter") Pelley

- Reassure yourself or the snake bite victim. Melbourne's snake venom can act very quickly and symptoms can show up quite fast and be very serious and terrifying. Cardiac arrest can occur within 20 – 30 minutes. Reassuring the victim may be all they have at the time to keep them going while waiting or receiving assistance.
- When you arrive at hospital, tell the doctors exactly what happened to you. Do not withhold or add information that is not true. The information you provide will help determine the right treatment.

There, you will learn exactly how to apply pressure bandages and what to do in the event of a snake bite for you or your child.



As a precaution I strongly recommend, if you have not already done so, enrol yourself and all people old enough to attend a first aid course.

Mark "The Snake Hunter" Pelley is a Melbourne based venomous snake catcher. He also works as a snake consultant teaching schools, communities and businesses how to keep safe from venomous snakes. To learn more, follow The Snake Hunter on Facebook @SnakeHunterAus.



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