

Rattlesnake Season

Rattlesnake “season” is typically April through October. During the hottest days they may be found in cool, shady areas. Although rattlesnakes are generally not aggressive, they will strike when they are threatened or provoked. They usually retreat if they can. Most snake bites occur when a rattlesnake is handled or accidentally touched by someone walking or climbing. The majority of snake bites occur on the hands, feet, and ankles. Be aware that startled rattlesnakes may not rattle before striking defensively. Generally, the most serious effect of a bite to an adult is tissue damage which needs to be treated. Children, because they are smaller, are in more danger if they are bitten. There are several safety measures that you can take to protect yourself.

When Hiking:

- Always wear hiking boots when walking through wild areas
- Stick to designated, well-used trails and wear over-the-ankle boots and loose-fitting long pants
- At home and on trails avoid tall grass, weeds, and heavy underbrush where snakes may hide
- Do not step or put your hands where you cannot see, and avoid wandering around in the dark
- Never hike alone - always have someone with you who can assist in an Emergency
- Leash your dog and watch them closely when out hiking because they are at increased risk of being bitten due to their habit of holding their nose to the ground while investigating the outdoors

At Home:

- Be careful when stepping over the doorstep - snakes like to crawl along the edge of buildings where they are protected on one side
- Teach curious children to respect snakes and to leave them alone – never pick them up
- Do not handle a freshly killed snake, it can still inject venom
- Avoid common hiding places for snakes like piles of rocks and stacks of wood

What To Do If You Are Bitten by a Rattlesnake:

- Dial 911
- Stay calm
- Wash the bite area gently with soap and water
- Remove watches, rings, etc, which may constrict swelling
- Immobilize the affected area
- Transport safely to the nearest medical facility
- If the doctor is more than 30 minutes away, keep the bite below the heart, and then try to get to the doctor as quickly as possible

What you should NOT do after a rattlesnake bite:

- DON'T apply a tourniquet
- DON'T pack the bite area in ice
- DON'T cut the wound with a knife or razor
- DON'T use your mouth to suck out the venom
- DON'T let the victim drink alcohol