

# Snake Bite

## Emergency Procedures

**Note:** Venom from a poisonous snake bite travels through the lymph system. Motion will speed the flow – hence it is most important that the victim lay down and remain calm.

### SYMPTOMS

- Usually two small puncture marks in the skin
- Burning pain and local swelling
- Area around bite discolors to purple or green
- Dry feeling in mouth

### TREATMENT:

Regardless of which First Aid procedure below is followed, the victim should be examined by a doctor as soon as possible.

1. If antivenin is available, it should be injected immediately.
2. If antivenin is not available, use the constrictor suction method:
  - a. Crush the antiseptic ampule in your fingers, remove the cardboard cover and, using the saturated swab, clean the entire area of the bite and the scalpel blade.
  - b. Place the lymph constrictor around the limb between the bite and the heart within 1.5" of the wound. Tighten only until the skin is dented. Insure there is a pulse above and below the wound. The intent is to merely retard the lymph flow.

If constrictor cannot be applied due to location, simply proceed with the balance of the treatment.

- c. Remove body hair from bite area with scalpel to ensure a smooth skin surface for suction device.
- d. Apply suction over bite by squeezing the cup, placing it over the wound and then releasing. Most of the venom should be removed over a one hour period.
- e. Every 10 minutes, or as swelling spreads, loosen constrictor for 1 minute and reapply a little closer to the heart just beyond the swelling.

Do not administer alcohol or stimulants. Alcohol will spread the flow of the venom through the lymph system.

**NOTE:** Although the fatality rate from snake-bite is less than 1% for a treated bite, transportation to a hospital should be done as soon as practical. If the victim must walk, movement should be slow, with frequent stops.

Continue to apply suction.

Non-poisonous snakes may also bite. In this case, you will usually see two U-shaped rows of fine tooth marks. The wound should be cleaned with mild soap and water and covered with a sterile dressing. An antibiotic ointment could also be applied if available.

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