



Title: Snake Bite

SOP Number: 032

Purpose: To describe the steps that need to be taken in case of a snake bite by a venomous snake.

DO:

- Move to an area away from the snake.
- Identify the snake. This will help in the treatment of the bite.
- Keep the person that has been bitten as calm and still as possible to slow down diffusion of venom.
- Call 9-911 and notify the EMS personnel what has happened. Explain that the patient requires medical attention at UMC, if in Lubbock, or relevant hospital in the area, if in the field.
- Include both the common and scientific names of the snake involved.
- Remove any clothing or jewelry that may restrict blood flow or swelling.
- Keep the affected limb immobilized (the Pillstrom tongs will work as a splint for an arm or a leg; for a finger use a pen or pencil wrapped with gauze) but keep it loose enough not to restrict blood flow.

If the bite is from a coral snake, sit or lie down so that the bite is in a neutral position and keep the affected area below the level of the heart (do not allow gravity to help disseminate the venom) or in whatever position is most comfortable; if it is a rattlesnake, keep the affected limb at or slightly below the level of the heart. If it is one of the other pit vipers (copperhead, cottonmouth water moccasin) or true viper bite, keep the affected and immobilized limb either slightly elevated or even with the level of the heart to avoid excessive tissue damage to the affected area by necrosis.

After EMS personnel arrive, direct them to transport the patient to UMC, if in Lubbock, or relevant hospital in the area, if in the field. If the situation allows, the recommendation is to go along with the person that has been bitten. If not, then be absolutely certain that the EMS personnel know *exactly* what kind of snake was involved in the envenomation in case the person that has been bitten somehow cannot convey that information.

DO NOT:

- Apply tourniquet, ice, or tap water.
- Cut near the bite wound.
- Give the person anything to eat or drink.
- Take any pain-relieving medicine, such as aspirin, ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil, and others) or naproxen sodium (Aleve). Doing so can increase risk of bleeding.

Report the incident to the Animal Care Services Manager; 806-834-2872 or the IACUC Coordinator; 806-834-6183. Then call Dr. Lou Densmore at (806) 834-6479 or (806) 438-8028 –cell.