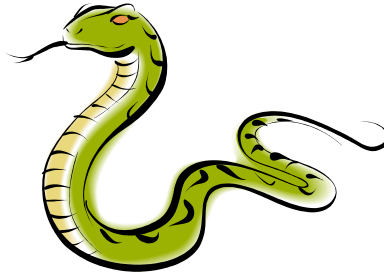


# BIRMINGHAM-SOUTHERN COLLEGE CAMPUS POLICE



***The information on snakes below is not meant to alarm the public. Snakebites are extremely rare in occurrence and respond well to treatment.***

## **Snake Bite Prevention Tips:**

- Leave snakes alone.
- Do not leave food out doors. (Food left out for dogs or cats can attract rodents, which are a source of food for snakes.)
- Many people are bitten because they try to kill a snake or get too close to it.
- Stay out of tall grass unless you wear thick leather boots and remain on hiking paths as much as possible.
- Be cautious after dark. Snakes are active during the evening hours.
- Ropell and other chemical treatments can make a barrier that will repel snakes in small areas such as a small yard. Such products are only a short-term solution.
- Keep hands and feet out of areas you cannot see. Do not pick up rocks or firewood unless you are out of a snake's striking distance.
- Be cautious and alert when climbing rocks.

## **What snakes cause poisonous bites?**

Any of the following "pit viper" snakes cause poisonous bites:

- Rattlesnake
- Copperhead
- Cottonmouth Water Moccasin
- Coral Snake

## **Treatment**

Call for emergency assistance immediately if someone has been bitten by a snake. Responding quickly in this type of emergency is crucial. While waiting for emergency assistance:

- Wash the bite with soap and water.
- Immobilize the bitten area and keep it lower than the heart.
- Cover the area with a clean, cool compress or a moist dressing to minimize swelling and discomfort.
- Monitor vital signs.

## **If a victim is unable to reach medical care within 30 minutes, the American Red Cross recommends:**

- Apply a bandage, wrapped two to four inches above the bite, to help slow the venom. This should not cut off the flow of blood from a vein or artery – the band should be loose enough to slip a finger under it.
- A suction device can be placed over the bite to help draw venom out of the wound without making cuts. These devices are often included in commercial snakebite kits.

*This content was last reviewed by a University of Maryland Medicine expert on May 2, 2003.*

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