

SUMMER SNAKE SEASON SAFETY TIPS

IDENTIFY YOUR SNAKES



PUFF ADDER - DANGEROUS! Venom is cytotoxic with haematotoxic and cardiotoxic effects. Antivenom essential. Hunts at dusk. If disturbed, they will hiss loudly and continuously, body will coil in 'S' shape. May appear to back away from the threat towards cover, but then strike suddenly and with speed. They are apparently able to penetrate soft leather. They can strike to a distance of about one-third of their body length.

CAPE COBRA - DANGEROUS! Forages throughout the day. Will readily climb trees and bushes. When unactive, it hides in holes or under ground cover. It is fast and alert, when disturbed it will raise its forebody off the ground, spread a broad hood and hiss loudly. Once on the defensive, it strikes readily. If the threat remains motionless, the snake will quickly look for an escape, but any sort of movement will get the snake into a defensive posture again.



MOLE SNAKE - NOT VENOMOUS! This snake is inoffensive, nonvenomous and will always attempt to move off if encountered. If cornered and provoked it will hiss and strike and if restrained will attempt to bite. The bite is powerful and the teeth may inflict painful cuts, but this is not serious as there is no venom. This species is a major predator of mice, rats and mole-rats and thus a very useful species to have in agricultural and urban areas. This snake is a good burrower and spends much time underground where it finds its rodent prey.

LOCAL SNAKE CATCHERS NUMBERS:

Justin Tracey – 074 643 5499

Steven Mole – 071 970 3867

Steve Heldzingen – 083 301 4837

Aiden – 072 344 4968

Shaun (Snake Park) – 083 6433 103

OTHER IMPORTANT NUMBERS:

FISH HOEK EMERGENCY CONTROL CENTRE - 021-782 0333

CMR 24 HOUR - 082 782 4444

MEDICLINIC CONSTANTIA BERG 24 HOUR EMERGENCY - 021-799 2196

TYGERBERG HOSPITAL POISON HOTLINE - 021-913 2010

Ensure your safety - If one comes across a snake in a residential area, do not attempt to remove it yourself.

DO:

- Call your nearest snake handler.
- Keep your distance from the snake, while watching its movement. Take note of what it is doing and where it is going.
- Clear the area and keep everyone, including dogs, away from the snake.

Emergency protocol in the event of a snake bite:

DO:

- Phone the Tygerberg Hospital Poison Hotline at 021 913 2010 for advice on what to do in the event of a snake bite. Remember it is always useful to know what type of snake has been involved.
- Keep the victim calm and immobilised. Immobilise the limb if the bite occurred on an arm or a leg, and transport the victim to the closest hospital at the very earliest convenience.
- If the victim has difficulty with or stops breathing, resort to artificial respiration or cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).
- Provide as much information on the incident as possible (time of the bite, the type of snake involved – if it can be identified, and any information on the patient's reaction to the bite, bearing in mind that a bite by a non-venomous snake can also result in a patient showing symptoms of shock and anxiety or angst).

DO NOT:

- Cut and try to suck venom from the wound as it will not help.
- Use ice or very hot water.
- Give the victim alcohol as this will merely assist the spread of the venom
- Apply electric shock.
- Inject anti-venom randomly. It needs to be administered by a doctor in a hospital environment.

If administered by non-medically trained personnel, it may lead to severe allergic reaction, anaphylactic shock and further complications for the patient.

Source : Capenature.co.za