

# Snakes in Arizona



Arizona coral snake



Sidewinder



Grand Canyon pink rattlesnake



Hopi rattlesnake



Prairie rattlesnake



Mojave rattlesnake



Western diamondback rattlesnake



Arizona black rattlesnake



Western hognose snake



Red racer



Great Basin rattlesnake



Tiger rattlesnake

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## Snakes and Snake bites:

For the purposes of protecting ourselves and our domestic animals, the actual mechanism of how poison is delivered is not as important as not getting bitten. Equally important to not getting bitten, is what to do if bitten. Neurotoxins in the venom cause flaccid paralysis. Venom can also damage the heart, lungs, and kidneys. The size and age of the victim affect toxicity. Children are therefore quite vulnerable. It is important to note that newly dead snakes can still bite and eject venom. Snakes retain reflexes for a short while after death that allows them to respond to stimulation including biting. In fact, the biting reflex can persist even when the head is cut off.

## **First Aid for a snake bite:**

- The immediate goal is to slow down venom absorption and get to a hospital as quickly as possible as snake bites are life threatening. If medical attention is delivered within the first six hours following the bite, the damage caused by the venom to the body, and fatality rate is much lower.
- Keep the victim calm. Approximately 70% of all snake bites are non-venomous. Another 50% of all venomous bites are “dry”, meaning the snake did not inject venom at the time of the bite.
- Immobilize the affected limb.
- Remove rings, watches, jewelry, restrictive clothing.
- Track the swelling by marking the edge of the wound farthest from the arm or leg. Note the time of initial mark and continue to mark the progression of swelling and the time. If possible, measure the circumference of the swelling and record serially.
- Do not allow the victim to exert themselves. Exercise increases venom absorption.
- Compression of bite area may worsen tissue damage. Avoid compression unless needed to control bleeding from wound.
- DO NOT use a tourniquet
- DO NOT attempt to extract the venom
- DO NOT wash or manipulate wound
- DO NOT irrigate the wound.

