



**WALGETT ABORIGINAL MEDICAL SERVICE
CO-OPERATIVE LIMITED**

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SNAKE - INFORMATION

AS AT FEBRUARY 2014

Snakes come out of hibernation during the warmer months of the year and in urban areas will inevitably move into, or near places where people live and work in search of food or a mate. Snakes may have found quiet shelter at a site whilst the site has been vacant over weekends or holiday breaks. Cool, dark protected areas such as under buildings and near sheds, around rubble and stored materials, and in long grass are typical areas that snakes may be found.

As with all Australian native animals, snakes are protected under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* and cannot lawfully be killed or taken from the wild and held in captivity. It can often be difficult to tell the difference between a venomous and non-venomous snake. All snakes are best left alone.

Snakes are not usually aggressive and do not seek confrontation with humans but may retaliate if provoked. **The important thing to remember is to never attempt to catch or kill a snake** – most snake bites occur when people are trying to do this.

- 1. Snake bites in Australia can be potentially fatal so immediate medical assistance should be sought for all cases of suspected snake-bite**
- 2. While not all snakes are venomous, it is difficult to identify snakes so all bites should be treated as dangerous**
- 3. No case of real or suspected snakebite should be regarded as trivial**
- 4. Appropriate first aid should be applied and the patient promptly placed under medical supervision**

What to do if bitten:

- REMAIN CALM - death from most snake bites is not instantaneous.
- Apply a splint to the bitten limb to restrict muscle contraction.
- GO IMMEDIATELY TO THE HOSPITAL! At the hospital, they will administer anti-venom, if needed. Anti-venom is the only effective treatment available for treating snakebites.
- Avoid anything that thins your blood or accelerates your heart rate: alcohol, cigarettes, aspirin, etc.

Prevention

1. Minimise food sources for snakes by removing anything that attracts rodents or frogs.
2. Reduce rubbish/materials where a snake could shelter.
3. During high risk times or after holiday breaks/weekends, remind staff and clients of the increased risk of the presence of snakes.
4. Wear gloves and boots when moving stored materials and rubbish - they will give some protection.
5. An increased awareness of snakes

For further information – please view
<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/animals/snakes.htm>