



**AMBULANCE FACT SHEET**

ISSUED JULY 2009

# Snake bite



Typically as the weather heats up there is an increase in snake sightings and incidence of snake bites.

**For all medical emergencies dial Triple Zero (000) immediately and ask for Ambulance**

Australia has over 140 different snake species and although around 100 are venomous only 12 can inflict a bite that may kill you.

It is important that people be wary of snakes and take proper precautions when outdoors in the coming months.

If you or someone you are with is bitten by a snake dial Triple Zero (000) immediately and ask for Ambulance.

### AVOIDING SNAKE BITE

- > Snakes aren't normally aggressive and will only bite when provoked or hurt, this is why Ambulance suggests if you see a snake, leave it alone and walk away NEVER try to catch or kill a snake.
- > If you find a snake within the area of your home and need it removed, call the National Parks and Wildlife Service who will put you in contact with a trained professional.
- > When bush walking always wear appropriate shoes and stay on the designated walking tracks.
- > ALWAYS let someone know where you are going and when you expect to be back.

### WHAT TO DO IN THE EVENT OF A SNAKE BITE

- > STAY CALM and reassure the patient, remember help is on the way.
- > If it is safe to do so remove yourself from further danger but DO NOT touch or try to catch the snake.
- > If you have a pressure bandage apply it to the wound and then wrap it up the limb no tighter than you would do if you had sprained your ankle. DO NOT cut off the circulation.
- > If the bite is not on a limb apply pressure direct to the site of the bite.
- > Keep the patient still and advise them to avoid walking.
- > Do not cut or excise the wound and DO NOT apply a tourniquet as this may complicate the injury.
- > DO NOT suck the wound.

The Ambulance Service of New South Wales recommends that everyone undertake a first aid course with a registered agency, particularly if you are regularly involved in outdoor activities.

**For further information please contact:**