



October 3, 2014

## Creepy crawlies on move with warmer weather

NSW Ambulance is asking people to be mindful that the arrival of spring and warmer weather has coincided with increased snake and spider activity and the potential for bites.

Snakes in particular are on the move, looking for food and a mate after their winter hibernation. Since July 1, 2014, NSW Ambulance paramedics have attended 27 Triple Zero (000) calls for suspected\* snake bites.

Another 55 calls involved suspected\* spider bite injuries, and three cases of patients swallowing spiders. This season's first funnel web spider bite was responded to on July 17 - there have been 11 suspected bites so far.

Meantime, redback spider activity is also expected to pick up after their winter hibernation. Funnel webs, which are Australia's deadliest spider, are active year-round.

NSW Ambulance Inspector Giles Buchanan advised that in the event of a snake or spider bite, people should call Triple Zero (000) and ask for an ambulance.

He added first aid for snake and spider bites varied depending on the species.

### For snakes and funnel web spiders:

- if the bite is on a limb, apply a pressure immobilisation bandage. The bandage should not cut off the circulation;
- if the bite is not on a limb, apply direct, firm pressure to the bite site with your hands. Keep the patient still and discourage them from walking around; and
- remember, never cut or excise the wound and do not attempt to suck the venom out. And do not apply a tourniquet.

### For spiders (eg redbacks, white-tails, trapdoors):

- apply an ice pack or cold compress to relieve the pain; and
- if severe symptoms develop, seek medical aid; and
- in the case of small children involved in a suspected redback spider bite, medical aid should be sought, irrespective of whether symptoms manifest.

The NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) advises snakes are not naturally aggressive and always prefer to retreat. They will only attack humans if hurt, provoked or cornered – most bites occur when people try to kill or capture snakes.

If people come across a snake in the bush, they are advised to back slowly away and leave the snake alone. Around the home, remove piled up debris from the yard and keep lawns mowed to reduce the potential for reptilian surprises.

Insp Buchanan recommended that people check clothing that had been left outside before wearing them. "Paramedics have attended many cases where people have put on boots and gloves and been bitten by spiders and even snakes which were hidden inside," he said.

If you find a snake in your home or garden and would like it removed, call OEH on 1300 361 967 for contact details on licensed reptile handlers, or the Ask Environment Line at [www.environment.nsw.gov.au](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au).

Alternatively, if you need assistance or advice on reptiles, contact WIRES (NSW Wildlife Information Rescue and Education Service Inc) on 1300 094 737, or go to [www.wires.org.au](http://www.wires.org.au).

**Save Triple Zero (000) for saving lives**



The Australian Reptile Park & Wildlife Sanctuary advises that, if bitten by a snake, under no circumstances should a person try to catch the reptile for its venom. Hospitals have venom detection kits and will be able to test that bite site, determine the species of snake and administer the anti-venom.

Insp Buchanan said NSW Ambulance paramedics attended many cases where it did not always transpire that patients had been bitten by a poisonous snake or spider, however it was better to call Triple Zero (000) for assistance to be on the safe side.

\*Bites are largely regarded as “suspected” until the poison/species can be officially identified.

**Snakes & Spider bites – July 1 to September 30**

Q = Query: where there is uncertainty

**SYDNEY**

3/7	Shalvey	25yo m	Spider	Hospital
16/7	Bowral	96yo m	Q spider bite on leg	No transport to hosp
16/7	Mortdale	18yo m	Q funnel web - ankle	St George Hospital
17/7	Tennyson	68yo m	Q snake bite	No transport
19/7	Winmalee	40yo f	Black spider – arm	No transport
21/7	Blaxland	40yo f	Q spider – finger	No transport
22/7	Box Hill	14yo m	Red belly black – hand	Hawksbury Hospital
24/7	Chester Hill	15yo f	Swallowed spider - tongue	Auburn Hosp
31/7	Waterloo	66yo f	Spider bite – buttock	Royal Prince Alfred
4/8	Bundeena	40yo f	Q funnel web – finger	Sutherland Hospital
8/8	The Oaks	23yo m	Red belly black – hand	Campbelltown Hosp
9/8	Edgecliff	10mo boy	Swallowed spider	No transport
9/8	Dee Why	11mo girl	Spider – small black	No transport
10/8	Mortdale	52yo f	Small brown spider- hand	No transport
16/8	Bardwell Valley	32yo f	Q red belly black snake	No transport
17/8	Springwood	45yo f	Q funnel web bite	No transport
20/8	North Parra	21yo f	Bitten by spider	No transport
21/8	Oatley	17yo m	Q bitten by spider on elbow	No transport
24/8	Kellyville	49yo m	Bitten by spider	No transport
3/9	Caringbah	34yo m	Snake bite to hand	No transport
5/9	South Penrith	33yo m	Bitten by funnel web – hand	Nepean Hospital
7/9	Rose Bay	60yo f	Bitten by garden spider	No transport
8/9	Crows Nest	45yo f	Q bitten by spider on foot	No transport
11/9	Smithfield	37yo m	Redback spider bite	No transport
11/9	Hurstville	8mo male	Spider bite on finger	No transport
13/9	Panania	84yo f	Q spider bite on leg	No transport
14/9	Elderslie	4yo f	Redback spider in boot	No transport
15/9	Wattle Grove	8yo m	Snake bite	Liverpool Hosp
16/9	Ingleburn	35yo f	Bitten by spider	Campbelltown H
16/9	Leumeah	20yo m	Bite from brown spider	Campbelltown H
18/9	Cranebrook	72yo m	Q Brown snake bite	Nepean Hosp
21/9	North Richmond	10yo f	Q snake bite	No transport
23/9	Castle Hill	31yo m	Spider bite	Hospital
26/9	McGraths Hill	81yo m	Q snake bite to leg	Hawksbury Hospital
26/9	Kogarah	21yo m	Snake bite to leg	St George Hosp
27/9	Bonnyrigg Hts	25yo f	Redback spider bite	No transport
28/9	Kingsgrove	20yo m	Spider bite inside mouth	Canterbury Hosp
28/9	Cecil Hills	47yo m	Spider bite to finger	No transport
28/9	Heckenberg	2yo f	Spider bite to bottom	No transport
29/9	Faulconbridge	65yo m	Bitten on the finger by funnel web	Nepean Hosp

**NORTHERN**

5/7	Gorokan	32yo f	Spider bite – foot	No transport to hosp
10/7	Evans Head	53yo m	Red belly black – thumb	Lismore Base Hosp
13/7	Woy Woy	23yo f	Q funnel web bite	No transport

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22/7	Tascott	92yo f	Snake bite – ankle	Gosford Hosp
24/7	Byron Bay	25yo m	Snake bite – ankle	Byron Bay Hosp
31/7	Bonnells Bay	12yo m	Q funnel web bite	Wyong Hosp
8/8	Speers Point	3yo m	Spider – finger	No transport
13/8	Holgate	41yo f	Q funnel web – finger	No transport
17/8	Boambee	23yo m	Spider bite – head	Coffs Harbour Base
21/8	Port Macquarie	68yo m	Q funnel web – thumb	Pt Macqu Base H
30/8	Wallsend	7yo f	Q black snake – foot	No transport
1/9	Karangi	28yo f	Bitten by funnel web	Coffs Harbour Base
3/9	Sapphire Bch	20yo f	Snake bite to ankle	Coffs Harbour Base
7/9	Cessnock	32yo m	Bitten by spider on leg	No transport
9/9	Cooranbong	3yo m	Q redback spider – hand	No transport
14/9	Brushgrove	23yo m	Red belly black snake	Grafton Base Hosp
23/9	Bar Beach	35yo f	Black house spider	No transport
26/9	Cooranbong	81yo m	Brown snake bite	Wyong Hosp
28/9	Gateshead	39yo f	Bite on hand, Q spider	No transport
29/9	Nimbin	12yo m	Snake bite to hand	Lismore Base Hosp
29/9	Suffolk Park	62yo f	Q snake bite to foot	No transport
29/9	Coldstream	64yo m	Snake bite to leg	Grafton Base Hosp
<b>SOUTHERN</b>				
8/7	Woonona	42yo m	Spider bite – hand	Wollongong Hosp
24/7	Sussex Inlet	33yo m	Q funnel web – arm	No transport
31/7	Woonona	5mo girl	Small Spider – leg	No transport
20/8	Hay	71yo m	Bitten by black snake	Hay Hospital
12/9	Dalmeny	19yo f	Spider bite on neck	No transport
30/9	Farmborough Hts	39yo f	Spider bite to leg	No transport
<b>WESTERN</b>				
13/7	Broken Hill	15yo m	Q spider bite	Broken Hill Hosp
29/7	Broken Hill	21yo m	Spider bite	Broken Hill Hosp
5/8	Lake Cargellico	33yo m	Spider bite	Lake Cargellico H
17/8	Kandos	50yo f	Q snake bite	No transport
5/9	Invergowrie	40yo f	Q redback spider bite	Armidale Hospital
10/9	Armidale	28yo m	Q snake bite on knee	No transport
10/9	South Tamworth	39yo f	Q spider bite on arm	No transport
13/9	Mooki Springs	16yo m	Snake bite	Quirindi Hosp
13/9	Breeza	18yo m	Snake bite – ankle	Tamworth Base H
20/9	Inverell	9yo m	Snake bite on leg	Inverell Pub Hosp
28/9	Collarenebri	23yo m	Bitten on neck by spider	No transport

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