



What

A snake bite occurs when a snake bites a person or animal. Most bites are acts of self-defense, often occurring when someone tries to harm or capture the snake. If the snake is venomous, it can inject venom into the skin or tissue through its fangs.



Who

All travelers visiting snake-endemic regions are at risk of snake bites, especially when moving through open terrain, though snakes may sometimes enter domestic areas. Individuals who keep venomous snakes as pets or work with them professionally are also at risk.



Where and when

Snakes are found worldwide, both on land and in water. While they are more common in warm, humid areas, snakes can also be found in desert environments.

Bite prevention

Prevention is essential!

Never pick up a snake, and travelers should wear appropriate clothing and sturdy shoes. Always watch where you place your hands and feet, and if traveling at night, use a flashlight. If you encounter a snake, stay calm and slowly step away—do not attempt to catch it. It's also recommended to be informed about local snake species in the area.



Chemoprophylaxis

There is no prophylaxis available for snake bites. Treatment after a bite depends on whether the snake is venomous and if venom was injected. Antivenom may be required in some cases. Always seek medical attention as quickly as possible.

Symptoms

Different types of snake possess different types of venom. Some may affect the nervous system, the muscular system or the blood clotting system. People can also develop an allergic reaction to a snake bite. Either directly after the bite, or with delay, the bitten person can experience symptoms such as fang spots around the wound (not always visible) or blood oozing from bite wound. But also other symptoms like pain or swelling at the bite site or nausea or vomiting. Headache, sudden collapse, seizure, sore or weak muscles, spasms or shortness of breath could be signs of envenomation.



In case of a snake bite

- Stay calm!
- Do NOT wash the wound
- Do NOT try to suck the venom out of the wound
- Do NOT put a tight band or tourniquet around a limb
- Apply pressure immobilization bandage
- Seek medical care immediately!
- Check if your tetanus vaccination is up-to-date, if not, get it boosted