



FRIENDS OF MERRI CREEK

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Incorporated Association No. A0024645L

Snake Bite First Aid

Information Taken from www.snakehandler.com.au/ and www.sssafe.com.au
Photo of a Tiger Snake from (http://www.abc.net.au/reslib/200709/r185049_688053.jpg)



Prevention: Avoiding snakes during field work

- **Be aware** of where you are placing **your feet**.
- **Wear strictly long pants** and sturdy **closed-toe shoes** when walking off footpaths in bushland.
- **Do not leave piles of materials or rubbish** lying around for long periods.
- **Never reach into or under hollows, logs or thick grass** without checking them first.
- **If you see a snake, leave it alone.** If the snake is near buildings call a snake handler.

First Aid: *Carry a pressure bandage and/or snake bite first aid kit with you in the field.*

- **Manage Danger:** assume the snake is venomous until it is identified
- **Phone for an ambulance** on **'000'**
- **Keep the bitten person quiet**, still and reassured. Continued movement and excessive anxiety only helps speed the spread of venom through the body
- **Apply pressure bandage:** Remove jewellery/bracelet/watch from affected limb. Then apply bandage, beginning at the bite site and continue down the limb and then back to the top. Leave fingertips/toes exposed to maintain circulation. If pressure bandage is not available, flexible material can be used, for example, clothing torn into strips. Lock out the joints and bandage as firmly as that for a sprain
- **Do not remove** clothing.
- **Splint the limb:** the use of a pressure bandage and a splint reduces muscle movement and slows the progression of the venom. Pad between legs with clothing/blanket or use other leg as a splint.
- **Monitor and reassure** the bitten person that first aid measures are in place and he or she is going to be ok. If they are semi conscious or vomiting, gently roll he or she onto their side (recovery position). Watch closely for any symptoms and note how long after the bite they occur. These observations will help the doctor determine the severity and rate of envenomation.
- **Leave the bandage and splint on** until you reach medical care.

Do Not:

- Give Alcohol: This can hamper the treatment process.
- Give Drugs: Including painkillers, this hampers the treatment process.
- Have the snake killed: Doctors do not need the snake to identify the type of antivenin to use.
- Apply a tourniquet: This cuts off circulation.
- Cut the wound: This can worsen the envenomation by adding it directly to the blood stream.
- Wash the bitten area: with water or antiseptics. The snake can be identified using the venom left on the skin.