

SEASONAL HEALTH ALERT

Issued: June 28, 2018 For: Public Health Districts, Legislators and Media

Questions, contact WAPC, 24/7/365, by calling: 1 (800) 222-1222.

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Snake Safety and Snake Bites

Washington state summer hiking season is here, bringing unexpected opportunities to interact with native wildlife, including snakes. While the vast majority of snakes found in Washington state are harmless, the **Northern Pacific Rattlesnake is capable of delivering a venomous bite that can be life threatening**. Although typically limited to central and eastern Washington, rattlesnake species may cross into other regions.

KEEPING SAFE AROUND SNAKES

- Be proactive.
 - Know the name and location of your hiking trail.
 - Store the Washington Poison Center phone number: 1 (800) 222-1222 in your cell phone.
 - Limit cell phone use to preserve battery life.
- Wear over-the-ankle boots and long, loose hiking pants.
- Use open trails and carry a walking stick.
- Never step or reach into densely vegetated areas or rocky piles.
- If you encounter a rattlesnake or hear its distinctive rattle, move slowly away.
- Never attempt to investigate or capture a snake.



IN CASE OF A SNAKE BITE

- Remain calm. Call 911 or the Washington Poison Center: 1 (800) 222-1222.
- Restrict the movement of the affected limb.
- Because swelling may occur, remove rings and other constricting items from the limbs.
- Never attempt to extract the snake venom from the bite site.
- Never use commercially sold "Snake Bite Kits" or venom extractors.
 - They aren't effective and may worsen the tissue damage.
- Do not apply tourniquets or ice packs to the bite site or affected area or limb.
- Make a visual note of snake's description or safely photograph the snake - **but do not put yourself at risk**.
- Do not attempt to capture the snake.

If you, or another person, has suffered a snake bite and are experiencing difficulty breathing, face swelling, or loss of consciousness
CALL 911

The Washington Poison Center is always here to help, 24/7/365, by calling: 1 (800) 222-1222.
All calls are free and confidential.