



SEASONAL HEALTH ALERT

Snake Safety & Snake Bites

Issued: June 2023

Contact WAPC at mryuk@wapc.org with questions

Image of Northern Pacific Rattlesnake
Source: [Burke Museum](#)

Warm weather has finally arrived in Washington! Hikers, walkers, runners, and backyard adventurers aren't the only ones soaking up the sun, though — some may be joined by slithery friends. Thankfully, only one of the dozen snake species in Washington can be concerning for humans: **the Northern Pacific rattlesnake**. Rattlesnake bites are typically not lethal, but they can cause serious health concerns. Rattlesnakes are typically found in central and eastern Washington, but may cross into other regions.

STAYING SAFE AROUND SNAKES

- Be proactive:
 - Know the name and location of your hiking trail
 - Hike with a buddy. If you hike alone, check cell phone service or carry a satellite emergency device
 - Save our phone number in your cell phone: 1 (800) 222-1222
 - Limit cell phone use to preserve battery life
- Wear over-the-ankle boots and long, loose hiking pants
- Use designated trails and carry a walking stick or trekking poles
- 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 moving the bitten limb
- Because swelling may occur, remove rings and other constricting items
- Never attempt to extract the snake venom from the bite site
- Never use commercially sold "Snake Bite Kits" or venom extractors. They are not effective and may worsen the tissue damage.
- Do not apply tourniquets or ice to the bite site, affected area, or limb
- Make a visual note of the snake's description or safely photograph the snake, **but do not put yourself at risk**
- Do not attempt to capture the snake

Call 911 if someone has been bitten by a snake & is having difficulty breathing, starts swelling around the face, or loses consciousness