



## Weekly Safety Briefings

Week # 17– April 26 -30, 2021

### *Snake Safety*

---

**Introduction** – This week we will discuss snakes, how to identify the ones that are venomous and how to stay safe around snakes in general. With the weather warming up, snake activity will increase from now until the fall, and it is important to know what to do, and not do, to keep you and those around you safe.

#### **Monday** – Snake awareness

A crucial part of being best prepared for a chance encounter with any type of snake is expanding your knowledge of the most common ones here in the US. North America is home to thousands of snakes that hide under bushes near your campsite, sit at the edge of hiking trails, and may even saunter through your own backyard. So could you separate the harmless snakes from the dangerous ones? There are four snakes in the U.S. which are deadly venomous, the cottonmouth/water moccasin, the copperhead, the rattlesnake and the coral snake. It's important to understand how to distinguish venomous snakes from harmless ones—a simple skill that could save your life or the life of a loved one.

#### **Tuesday** – How to identify venomous vs non-venomous snakes

The features below are the quickest way too help you safety identify, from a distance, if a snake is venomous or not.

- Elliptical pupils (slit like eyes like a cat) instead of round ones.
- A broad, triangular head – a bulbous head and a skinny neck – due to the position of the snake's venom sacks underneath its jaw.
- Colorful patterns – Generally, most solid colored snakes are harmless. The more colorful and patterned a snake, the more careful around it you should be. Although there are always exceptions to these rules.
- It has a heat sensing pit. This is a feature that you may not be able to see very well from a distance. The heat sensing pit sits between the eyes and nose of the venomous snakes. Getting too close to a snake to look for this pit is not a good idea. This sensor is mostly seen on vipers.

#### **Wednesday** – What are your chances of being bitten by a venomous snake or dying from a bite in the US?

The chances of dying from a venomous snakebite in the United States is nearly zero, because we have available, high-quality medical care in the U.S. Fewer than one in 37,500 people are bitten by venomous snakes in the U.S. each year (7-8,000 bites per year), and only one in 50 million people will die from snakebite (5-6 fatalities per year). You are nine times more likely to die from being struck by lightning than to die of venomous snakebite.

#### **Thursday** – Venom delivery vs. Dry Bites

Venom delivery is voluntary -- snakes squeeze their venom glands with muscles to deliver venom. Although venomous snakes can deliver dry bites where no venom is secreted. Estimates show that 20-25% of all pit viper bites and 50% of Coral Snake bites are dry bites. Occasionally, the venom may be prematurely expelled from the fangs before they puncture the skin, which can also result in a dry bite.



## Weekly Safety Briefings

Week # 17– April 26 -30, 2021

### *Snake Safety*

---

#### **Friday – If you see a snake or get bitten by one**

If you see a snake outside leave it alone. Snakes are generally shy and will not attack unless provoked, so it's best to leave them be.

If you see a snake inside your home, get all people and pets out of the room immediately. Shut the door and fill the gap underneath with a towel, then call a professional wildlife removal service for assistance.

Top 5 things you need to do if you get bitten by a snake:

- 1) Call an ambulance immediately. You should treat any snake bite as an emergency, regardless of whether you think the snake was venomous or not.
- 2) Don't panic and don't move.
- 3) Leave the snake alone.
- 4) Apply a pressure immobilization bandage and splint.
- 5) Don't wash, suck, cut or tourniquet the limb that the bite is on.