

- **Pit Vipers:**

- Typified by rattlesnakes
 - triangular head
 - vertical elliptical pupils (“cat’s eyes”)
 - two elongated and hinged fangs in the front part of the jaw
 - heat-sensing (infrared-sensing) facial pits on the sides of the head midway between and below the level of the eyes and the nostrils
 - a single row of scales on the underbelly leading to the tail**(double row of scales on the underbelly is seen in nonpoisonous snakes)
 - 1-4 puncture marks
 - Adult pit viper can strike at a speed of 8ft (2.4cm) per second and may strike without warning.
- Central United States:
 - Cottonmouth
 - Copperhead
 - Massasauga rattlesnake
 - Timber rattlesnake
 - Prairie rattlesnake
- **Signs of envenomation**
 - One or more fang marks. In venomous species there will be one-four larger distinct markings from the elongated fangs that inoculate the victim with venom
 - Venomous snake bites tend to bleed more freely than bites from animals and insects
 - Burning pain at the site of the bite. (not present with Mojave rattlesnake) ▪ Swelling at the site of the bite (usually begins within 5-10 minutes and may become quite severe)
 - Numbness and tingling of the lips, face, fingers, toes, and scalp 30-60 minutes after the bite.
 - Can also be secondary to hyperventilation from fear and excitement. (if patient has immediate symptoms more likely hyperventilation)
 - Twitching of the mouth, face, neck, eye, and bitten extremity muscles 30-90 minutes after the bite
 - Rubbery or metallic taste in the mouth 30-90 minutes after bite
 - Sweating, weakness, nausea, vomiting, fainting, bruising at the site of the bite, difficulty breathing, increased bleeding (bruising, bloody urine, bloody bowel movements, vomiting blood) and collapse

- **Coral Snakes:**

- Characterized by their color pattern with red, black, and yellow or white bands encircling the body.
 - Venomous species the rings completely encircle the body, and every other mid-body ring is yellow
- General rule: (only to coral snakes of the United States. Does not apply to foreign

species) “Red on yellow (or white)- kill a fellow (venomous)”

“Red on black-venom lack (nonvenomous)”

- Fangs are short and fixed
- Snakes have round pupils
- Bite with a chewing rather than striking action
- May also have a double row of scales on the underbelly
- **Signs of envenomation**

Burning pain at the site of the bite may or may not be present

Numbness and/or swelling of bitten arm or leg within 90 minutes.

Twitching, nervousness, drowsiness, giddiness, increased salivation, and drooling in 1-3 hours.

Slurred speech, double vision, difficulty talking and swallowing, impaired breathing 5- 10 hours after bite

Death from heart and lung failure

• Treatment of snake bite:

- *Definitive treatment is administration of antivenom.*
- Don't panic. Reassure the victim and keep him from acting in an energy-consuming purposeless fashion. Increased physical activity may increase his illness by hastening the spread of venom.
- Retreat out of striking range of the snake. (Proper distance is at least the length of the snake)
- If you see the snake try to identify but do not create another situation for another victim.
- Do NOT apply ice to the bite. It can cause frostbite and further necrosis of the affected area.
- Draw a circle around the envenomation site with time.
- Check pulses to make sure adequate peripheral blood flow every 30 minutes to an hour.
- Wash the site with soap and water
- Make sure victim stays adequately hydrated
- Watch for allergic reactions
- Remove ring, watches, etc.
- Mark the leading edge of tenderness/swelling on the skin and write the time alongside it.
- Do NOT do any of the following:

Do not pick up the snake or try to trap it. NEVER handle a venomous snake, not even a dead one or its decapitated head.

Do not wait for symptoms to appear if bitten, get medical help right away. Do not apply a tourniquet.

Do not slash the wound with a knife or cut it in any way.

Do not try to suck out the venom.

Do not apply ice or immerse the wound in water.

Do not drink alcohol as a painkiller.

Do not take pain relievers (such as aspirin, ibuprofen, naproxen).

Do not apply electric shock or folk therapies.