

SNAKE BITE TREATMENT

TECHNIQUE

Three steps: **KEEP THEM STILL!**

Step 1

Apply a bandage over the bite site, to an area about 10cm above and below the bite.

Step 2

Then using another elastic roller bandage, apply a firm wrap from fingers/toes all the way to the armpit/groin.

The bandage needs to be firm, but not so tight that it causes fingers or toes to turn purple or white. About the tension of a sprain bandage.

If you have a texta, mark the site of the bite on the bandage (or if not, dab a small smear of dirt/dust there).

Step 3

Splint the limb so the patient can't walk or bend the limb.

DO NOT...

- Cut, incise or suck the venom.
- EVER use a tourniquet
- Remove the shirt or pants - just bandage over the top of clothing.
(Remember movement, like wriggling out of a shirt or pants, causes venom movement).

DO NOT try to catch, kill or identify the snake!!! This is important.

In hospital we no longer need to know the type of snake; it doesn't change the treatment.

The new antivenom "**Polyvalent**" neutralises the venoms of all the 5 listed snake genus, so it doesn't matter what snake bit the patient.

Read that again - **one injection for all snakes!**

Australian snakes tend to have 3 main effects in differing degrees:

- Bleeding - internally and bruising.
- Muscles paralysed causing difficulty talking, moving & breathing.
- Pain (with some snakes, severe muscle pain in the limb, and days later the bite site can break down, forming a nasty wound).

Final tips: Not all people bitten are envenomated (injected with venom) and only those starting to show symptoms above are given antivenom. **Did I mention to stay still..?**