



# Snake & Spider Bite First Aid

All snakebites should be treated as potentially lethal.

## WARNING

-  **DO NOT** try to catch or kill the snake.
-  **DO NOT** allow casualty to move if possible. Bring help to the casualty.
-  **DO NOT** wash or wipe venom off the skin. Hospitals are able to identify snakes from venom samples taken from the bite site.
-  **DO NOT** cut bite site or area.
-  **DO NOT** try to suck venom out of bitten area.
-  **DO NOT** use a constrictive bandage (i.e. arterial tourniquet).
-  **DO NOT** remove bandage or splint once applied.

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[www.first-aid-courses.com.au](http://www.first-aid-courses.com.au)



**WESTERN BROWN SNAKE (OR GWARDER)**  
**Length:** up to 2m  
**Colour:** from light brown to dark shade  
**Markings:** sometimes with crossbands  
**Nature:** highly venomous and extremely fast  
**Location:** WA, SA, NT, QLD, some of VIC



**DUGITE SNAKE**  
**Length:** up to 2m  
**Colour:** grey, green or brown  
**Markings:** sometimes with crossbands  
**Nature:** generally avoid humans, most active October-November, highly venomous  
**Location:** WA, coastal parts of western SA



**EASTERN BROWN SNAKE**  
**Length:** average 1.5 - 1.8m  
**Colour:** from light brown to dark shade  
**Markings:** sometimes with crossbands  
**Nature:** timid but aggressive if provoked, extremely fast, highly venomous  
**Location:** QLD, NSW, VIC, SA, and parts of NT, WA (Kimberley region)



**DEATH ADDER**  
**Length:** up to 90cm  
**Colour:** shades of grey through brown  
**Markings:** irregular crossbanding  
**Nature:** appears sluggish, strikes with speed  
**Location:** Throughout Australia, except central deserts in SE NSW



**RED BELLED BLACK SNAKE**  
**Length:** average 1.5 - 2m  
**Colour:** gleaming black body  
**Markings:** red lower scales  
**Nature:** not very aggressive  
**Location:** East coast, swamps, river flats



**TAIPAN**  
**Length:** up to 3m  
**Colour:** pale to dark brown  
**Markings:** yellowish areas around head  
**Nature:** extremely aggressive, given to unprovoked attacks, deadly venom  
**Location:** Northern Australia



**TIGER SNAKE**  
**Length:** up to 2.1m  
**Colour:** pale grey to dark brown  
**Markings:** yellowish cross-banding  
**Nature:** not especially aggressive, but numerous and deadly  
**Location:** Southern WA, SA, TAS, VIC, NSW, Mainly Coastal Areas.



**COPPER HEAD**  
**Length:** up to 1.80m  
**Colour:** varies from coppery mid-brown to yellowish, redish, grey and black  
**Nature:** shy, retiring and prefer to escape rather than fight  
**Location:** Temperature territories of Southern & Eastern Australia, well adapted to cooler climates near water.



**FUNNEL-WEB SPIDER**  
**Length:** 10 - 15mm  
**Colour:** dark, ranging from black to brown  
**Nature:** extremely aggressive, rear back to bite  
**Location:** Eastern Coast of Australia



**RED-BACK SPIDER**  
**Length:** average 5 - 15mm  
**Colour:** black body with prominent red stripe on its abdomen  
**Location:** throughout Australia



# WHAT SHOULD I DO?

## BASIC LIFE SUPPORT FLOW CHART

### SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

After a person has been bitten, signs are not always visible and symptoms may only start to appear an hour or more later.

### SNAKE BITE

- ▶ Puncture marks or scratches
- ▶ Headache
- ▶ Nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea
- ▶ Double or blurred vision
- ▶ Breathing difficulties
- ▶ Drowsiness, giddiness, faintness, drooping eyelids, problems speaking or swallowing
- ▶ Pain or tightness in chest or abdomen

### SPIDER BITE

- ▶ Pain (moderate or severe)
- ▶ Nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea
- ▶ Excessive sweating

In addition to 'Spider Bite' Symptoms:

#### FUNNEL WEB SPIDER

- ▶ Abundant discharge of saliva
- ▶ Difficulty in breathing and muscular twitching
- ▶ Confusion leading to unconsciousness

#### RED BACK SPIDER

- ▶ Severe local pain which increases and spreads
- ▶ Small hairs stand upright

#### OTHER SPIDER

- ▶ Inflammation or swelling
- ▶ Burning feeling
- ▶ Blistering

### SNAKE, FUNNEL-WEB / MOUSE SPIDER BITES

- 1. CALM THE CASUALTY.** Lie the casualty down. This will slow down the absorption of venom and reduce the effect of shock.
- 2. CHECK BREATHING AND CIRCULATION.** If casualty is unconscious, follow **DRABCD**
- 3. APPLY PRESSURE IMMOBILISATION BANDAGE.** Such as a crepe or conforming roller bandage around the bite site firmly.



Then apply a firm crepe or roller bandage over the whole limb starting at the toes or finger tips. Bandage needs to be firm as for sprain but not too tight.



- 4. IMMOBILISE THE LIMB USING A SPLINT.** If bitten on the leg, use the other as a splint. Use bandage to tie legs together or to hold splint in place. Keep the bitten limb level with the rest of the body to slow down absorption of the venom in the body.



- 5. CALL 000 OR MOBILE 112 FOR MEDICAL HELP.**
- 6. MONITOR CASUALTY.** Check at fingers or toes for circulation. If they lose consciousness or breathing fails **DRABCD**

### RED-BACK SPIDER

- 1. APPLY WRAPPED ICE PACK** to bitten area to reduce pain.
- 2. RAISE LIMB** to limit swelling.
- 3. SEEK MEDICAL HELP.**



### OTHER SPIDERS

- 1. WASH** with water and soap.
- 2. APPLY WRAPPED ICE PACK** to relieve pain or discomfort.
- 3. SEEK MEDICAL ADVICE.**

**D**

### Check for Danger

Hazards / Risks / Safety?

**R**

### Responsive?

If not, CALL 000 for medical help

**A**

### Open Airway, look for signs of life

Signs of life = Conscious or responsive or breathing normally or moving

**B**

### Give 2 initial breaths

If not breathing normally or properly

**C**

### Give 30 chest compressions

(almost 2 compressions per second) then give 2 breaths

**D**

### Attach AED

(Automated External Defibrillator) as soon as available and follow its prompts

**C**

### Continue CPR

until qualified personnel arrive or signs of life return