



# TOOLBOX TALK



## TOPIC DISCUSSED:

# SNAKEBITES



Snakebites can be a life-threatening occurrence and do require immediate treatment. However, most victims do not require antivenom, as they have either experienced one of two instances; either it's a dry bite or a very small amount of venom had been injected which would not require antivenom.

The Mozambique Spitting Cobra accounts for the majority of serious bites, thereafter the Puff Adder, and then the Stiletto Snake and the Rhombic Night Adder. Most snakebite deaths within South Africa are caused by the Cape Cobra and Black Mamba.



## QUESTIONS:

1. What is the first and most important step to take when a victim has been bitten by a snake?
2. What can you do to make it easier for a medical professional to locate the snake bite?
3. True or False – Venom should be sucked out

# THE DANGERS, SYMPTOMS & TREATMENT OF SNAKEBITES

## SNAKEBITE SYMPTOMS

The symptoms of a snakebite will depend on the snake, here are some symptoms of different types of bites:

Nosebleed, small cuts, followed by bleeding from the mucous membranes. After several hours – **INTERNAL BLEEDING**



**BOOMSLANG**

Dizziness, difficulty swallowing and breathing, drooping eyes and nausea



**MAMBA**

Burning pain, followed by swelling that progresses up the limb and may affect the lymph



**MOZAMBIQUE SPITTING COBRA**

Common Symptoms include **SHOCK, NAUSEA, PAIN AND DIFFICULTY BREATHING**

No more than **15%** of snakebites will require **ANTIVENOM**

**DRY BITE:** a bite by a venomous animal in which **NO VENOM** is released

A bite mark is seldom the **CHARACTERISTIC OF TWO-FANG PUNCTURE MARK**

**40%** of patients treated with **antivenom** may experience an **ALLERGIC REACTION**

## FIRST AID

Get the victim to a **HOSPITAL** as soon as possible and in a safe manner

Keep the victim **CLAM**

**REMOVE** any rings and tight clothing

Apply Pressure Bandages when you are an **HOURLY AWAY** from the closest medical facility

Mark the snakebite with a pen or marker so that it could easily be identified by medical professionals

## IMPORTANT

**Do not waste time valuable time applying a pressure bandage, immediately transport the patient to the nearest hospital!**

## AVOID GETTING BITTEN

Leave the snakes alone

Wear boots and thick trousers or jeans

Step onto logs and rocks – never over them. Snakes are often partially concealed under logs or rocks

Never put your hands in out-of-sight places

Never walk barefoot in an open field or without a flashlight at night



**DO NOT CUT OR SUCK** out the venom

the venom spreads quickly and very little will be removed by suction

**INJECT ANTIVENOM** as a first-aid measure

It must be intravenously by a medical doctor in a hospital environment and usually in large quantities.

**APPLY ELECTRIC** shock therapy

It does not neutralise the venom

