

RATTLESNAKES IN CALIFORNIA

As springtime calls people and snakes alike to the outdoors, encounters with snakes become inevitable. California has a variety of snakes, most of which are benign. The exception is California's only native venomous snake – the rattlesnake.

Though rattlesnakes are dangerous if provoked, they also provide humans with a tremendous service as they eat rodents, other reptiles, and insects, and are in turn eaten by other predators.

Generally not aggressive, rattlesnakes strike when threatened or deliberately provoked, but given room they will retreat. Most snake bites occur when a rattlesnake is handled or accidentally touched by someone walking or climbing. The majority of snakebites occur on the hands, feet and ankles.

The potential of running into a rattlesnake should not deter anyone from venturing outdoors, but there are several precautions that can be taken to lessen the chance of being bitten when out in snake country – which is just about anywhere in California.

Most any snake may bite when threatened, but rattlesnake bites require urgent medical attention.

In the event of a bite, call 9-1-1 or contact the California Poison Control System. (Pharmacists, physicians, nurses, and poison information providers answer calls to 1-800-222-1222, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year).

DOS AND DON'TS IN SNAKE COUNTRY.

First, know that rattlesnakes are not confined to rural areas. They have been found near urban areas, in river or lakeside parks, and at golf courses.

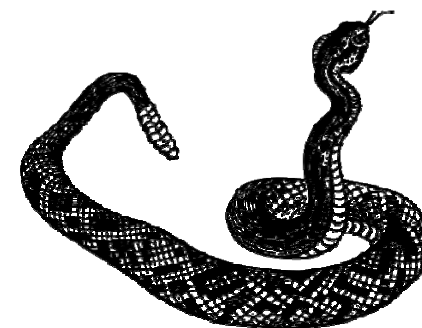
Be aware that startled rattlesnakes may not rattle before striking defensively. There are several safety measures that can be taken to reduce the likelihood of startling a rattlesnake.

- ❖ Never go barefoot or wear sandals when walking through wild areas. Wear hiking boots.
- ❖ When hiking, stick to well-used trails and wear over-the-ankle boots and loose-fitting long pants. Avoid tall grass, weeds and heavy underbrush where snakes may hide during the day.
- ❖ Do not step or put your hands where you cannot see, and avoid wandering around in the dark. Step ON logs and rocks, never over them, and be especially careful when climbing rocks or gathering firewood. Check out stumps or logs before sitting down, and shake out sleeping bags before use.
- ❖ Never grab “sticks” or “branches” while swimming in lakes and rivers. Rattlesnakes can swim.
- ❖ Be careful when stepping over the doorstep as well. Snakes like to crawl along the edge of buildings where they are protected on one side.
- ❖ Do not handle a freshly killed snake, it can still inject venom.
- ❖ Teach children early to respect snakes and to leave them alone. Children are naturally curious and will pick up snakes.

Source: <http://www.wildlife.ca.gov/News/Snake>

RIO VISTA COMMUNITY
ASSOCIATION

RATTLESNAKE AWARENESS



HOA MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS, INC.
POST OFFICE BOX 12710
BAKERSFIELD, CA 93389-2710
OFFICE & FACSIMILE (661) 456-9436
RVCA@HOACITY.COM
WWW.HOACITY.COM/RVCA

RATTLESNAKES IN THE RIO VISTA COMMUNITY.

As a reminder, in previous years we have had issues with rattlesnakes in our community. Please take a few minutes to educate yourself about the problem.

To protect your pets, you may want to consider a rattlesnake vaccination; following this section are excerpts from a rattlesnake vaccine pamphlet that explains rattlesnake bites and what the vaccine does.

The treatment consists of a vaccination followed by a booster shot three to four weeks later.

Some veterinarians might vaccinate cats with the rattlesnake vaccine.

Each of the two vaccinations cost \$30 - \$40. Please consult with your veterinarian if you are interested in taking this precaution.



To distinguish rattlesnakes from harmless native snakes, remember rattlesnakes have a distinct, triangular-shaped head, and usually have rattles at the end of their tail.

They do not always rattle before striking. If you see a rattlesnake, back away and avoid the animal – it strikes only in self-defense.

RATTLESNAKE BITE IS A VETERINARY EMERGENCY.

It results in serious injury or even death to thousands of dogs each year. Rattlesnake venom is a complex mixture of toxins that spreads through a dog's body following the bite.

Red Rock Rattlesnake Vaccine was developed specifically to help defend dogs from the dangerous effects of rattlesnake venom. That's rattlesnake protection that will put you and your dog at ease.

RATTLESNAKES LIVE IN A VARIETY OF HABITATS.

They are found in wetlands, deserts and forests, from sea level to mountain elevations.

Rattlesnakes are most active in warmer seasons, from spring to autumn. In southern latitudes they are occasionally found year-round.

DOGS ARE AT RISK FOR RATTLESNAKE BITE.

They can encounter a rattlesnake anytime they are in rattlesnake habitat. You and your dog may live near rattlesnakes. You may travel through or frequently visit places where rattlesnakes are found. Perhaps, rattlesnakes live where you take your dog hiking, camping or hunting.

Like people, dogs may stumble upon a snake by accident. Curiosity or a protective instinct can place your dog at risk. Red Rock Rattlesnake Vaccine helps to protect him/her.

DAMAGE CAUSED BY RATTLESNAKE BITE CAN BE SERIOUS.

When injected into an unprotected dog, the toxins in snake venom are very painful and can have serious consequences. Even if your dog survives the immediate effects of a rattlesnake bite, he/she can be permanently injured by the venom.

TREATMENT OF RATTLESNAKE BITE IS EXPENSIVE.

Treatment of snakebite may include anti-venom injections that can cost hundreds to thousands of dollars.

Use of anti-venom is associated with an increased risk of adverse effects which can complicate a dog's recovery. Other costs of snakebite treatment may include hospitalization, intravenous fluids, other medicines, and even surgery.

Vaccination can reduce the impact of snakebite, reduce or eliminate the need for anti-venom, and decrease other treatment costs.

THE VACCINE STIMULATES YOUR DOG'S OWN IMMUNITY.

Vaccines work by stimulating an animal's immunity to defend against potentially harmful agents. The Rattlesnake Vaccine is intended to help create an immunity that will protect your dog against rattlesnake venom.

SNAKEBITE IS ALWAYS AN EMERGENCY.

Even after your dog is vaccinated against rattlesnake venom, he/she should be taken to a veterinarian for evaluation and care as soon as possible following snakebite.

Veterinarians can determine whether your dog will require additional treatment. Even bites by non-venomous snakes can lead to serious infections and antibiotic treatment may be needed.

A veterinarian is the best person to consult regarding medical decisions for your dog.