

Here are some suggestions for what to do if bitten by a rattlesnake.

The goal is to get to the hospital as quickly and safely as possible. Early treatment is linked to a better outcome.

1. Move away from the snake.
2. Stay calm.
3. Call 911.
 - Ask the 911 operator about involving the Joint Rescue Coordination Centre. (The decision to send the Coast Guard is based on your location and which emergency service has the fastest response time.)
 - It is a very good idea to post the dock number and the longitude and latitude of your cottage by your phone. Relaying this information will speed up your rescue.
4. Reduce movement. If possible, do not move the part of the body where you were bitten and have someone carry you to the dock.
5. If you are alone, stay by a telephone.
6. Remove tight clothing and jewellery from the affected limb.
7. Wash the snake bite gently with soap and water.
8. Stay warm.
9. Place the limb at or below the level of the heart or lie down.

DO NOT apply ice or a tourniquet.

DO NOT cut or apply suction to the bite area.

DO NOT try to capture the snake.

NOTE: Even if you think the rattle snake did not inject venom, you should still go to the hospital. A dry bite can only be confirmed through blood tests.

Actions that may prevent a bite.

1. Keep your walking paths clear of brush and bushes so that snakes are easily visible.
2. Wear shoes (not sandals) at night, use a flashlight and consider carrying a stick to shake the bushes as you walk.
3. If you see a snake, stay away from it. Rattlers usually only bite if startled or if they feel threatened.
4. Educate your kids and guests about what rattle snakes look and sound like. It is helpful to know the difference between a rattlesnake, a fox snake and a garter snake.
5. Have a cottage “safety” sheet for anyone working or staying at your cottage; make sure they know what to do if bitten by a snake.

6. When working at the cottage, wear work boots and long pants.

7. Know your cottage dock number and longitude and latitude for the rescue crew.