

PET SAFETY AROUND SNAKES & SCORPIONS



**FROM
THE
VET**



Know your closest 24 hr emergency veterinary practice.

Test the number works and save it now! Trying to find this information in an emergency can take longer than you think and could waste critical time.

There are no home treatments for bites or stings

Early signs of envenomation might include (*but are not limited to*) any combination of the below:

- Unexplained sudden yelping or whining
- Drooling or foaming at the mouth
- Shaking head or rubbing head or face
- Excessive chewing or biting feet or limbs
- Sudden unexplained changes in behaviour (pacing, hiding, biting/snapping)

**If you see any of these signs and your pet may have been exposed to a snake or scorpion:
GET YOUR PET TO A VET**



If your pet is showing these signs, try and get to a vet, no matter how far away you are



Later signs of envenomation might include (*but are not limited to*) any combination of the below:

- Puncture marks, swelling, dilated pupils or pale gums
- Weakness, lethargy, wobbling, trembling, shaking, or collapse
- Streaming eyes and/or nose
- Difficulty breathing, vomiting or diarrhea
- Bleeding from the mouth/nose and/or anus

If your pet has been envenomated, they could be distressed and in pain
Expect them to act **totally** out of character

If you think your pet has been sprayed



- If you are less than 30mins from a vet, take your pet straight there
- If you are further away than 30mins, flush eyes with Effivet Ophthalmic Eye Cleanser (or similar solution) if available, then get your pet to a vet
- If not available, rinse with cold running water for 10mins, then get your pet to a vet. *Ensure your pet can always breath easily during rinsing process*
- Rinse coat/body with F10 shampoo (or similar pet-safe product) to ensure all venom has been removed from fur

- 🐾 **If you have seen your dog interacting with a snake or scorpion, assume they have been envenomated and get them to a vet. **Signs can be delayed.****
- 🐾 **Envenomation signs and prognosis vary greatly. Every pet, snake and scorpion is different.**
- 🐾 **Ensure your pet is secure at all times. Even if they seem unconscious/unable to move, their status can change rapidly and without warning.**

- ✓ Contain/leash/crate/secure your pet - they may try to run/hide but you **MUST** keep them with you so you are able to monitor them closely
- ✓ Stay calm - keep your pet as cool, calm and still as possible to keep their heart rate low
- ✓ If possible/safe take a photo of snake/scorpion but **do not** waste time doing this - prioritise getting your pet to a vet. See "FROM THE SCORPION/SNAKE EXPERT" section
- ✓ TRANSPORT YOUR PET TO A VET - CALL AHEAD AND LET THEM KNOW THAT YOU ARE COMING
- ✓ Keep a note of their condition (with progression time frames if possible as this will help your vet)

- ✗ **DO NOT** apply ice, bandage or tourniquet
- ✗ **DO NOT** cut wound or try to "suck out the venom"
- ✗ **DO NOT** soak your pet in anything or apply anything to them
- ✗ **DO NOT** give your pet any food, water or human medication
- ✗ **DO NOT** force feed your pet milk, charcoal, soap or anything else
NB - Pets aspirate (inhale things other than air into their lungs) very easily, especially if they are hypersalivating or nauseous.



Attend a comprehensive pet 1st aid course
Keep a well stocked pet 1st aid kit with you at all times
Get pet insurance as soon as your pet joins your family

See "FROM THE DOG TRAINER" section for ways to keep your pet safer around snakes & scorpions

PET SAFETY around SNAKES & SCORPIONS

**FROM THE
SNAKE
EXPERT**



**FROM THE
SCORPION
EXPERT**

Snakes and scorpions play an important role in our ecosystem. They should not be feared or harmed, but must always be respected.

Pets are extremely vulnerable, and the only way to guarantee your pet's safety is to prevent them from getting too close to a scorpion or snake.

THERE ARE CURRENTLY NO RELIABLE, PROVEN REPELLENTS OR DETERRENTS

If you suspect your pet has been bitten or sprayed by a snake, get them to a vet immediately

Do not wait for signs to show



Early veterinary intervention could save your pet's life

If you suspect your pet has been stung or sprayed by a scorpion, take them to a vet as soon as possible.



Many stings cause pain that may require management

Small, elderly or sick pets may be more affected

Stings and bites often happen on paws, legs, face and inside mouth
Signs of envenomation can vary - see "FROM THE VET" section for more information

- ✓ Keep your property free from debris, rubbish, logs and rocks as these are perfect hiding places.
- ✓ Keep grass short for better visibility
- ✓ Slightly elevate pet beds/kennels and shake/check daily for uninvited visitors
- ✓ Keep all doors and windows closed, especially between dusk and dawn or after rain
- ✓ Seal gaps around doors and windows
- ✓ Avoid walking after dark if possible - if not possible, **ALWAYS** walk with a good torch to illuminate the ground
- ✓ Avoid letting pets investigate holes, logs or rocks and prevent them from exploring underneath things (decking etc)

Know, and learn how to identify species in your area
See "FROM THE DOG TRAINER" section for other ways to keep your pet safer around snakes and scorpions

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- Many snakes are mostly active between dawn and dusk but some will often move away if you walk with heavy footsteps
- Wearing closed shoes can offer some protection, but some snakes can bite through gloves, coats, jeans and boots
- Having a bird feeder or pond may attract birds or amphibians, which in turn can attract snakes that feed on them



- Scorpions do not want to harm us or our pets and will only sting or spray if they feel threatened
- Some species of scorpion can climb very well
- Some species of scorpion can sting through gloves

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- Always assume that snakes are dangerous until formally identified. Size & shape can vary significantly.
- Use your local expert for identifications and removals - **OR** do a formal snake handling course and always have hook/tongs/tube/goggles quickly accessible
- Never encourage or allow pets to investigate, chase, catch or kill snakes. Even if it has happened before without consequences, next time could end very differently



- Sealing cracks in walls, paving and foundations will mean fewer hiding places for scorpions
- Ensure scorpions are securely contained if they are being transported or relocated
- Fencing your garden with small gauge mesh may stop scorpions from entering

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- Some snakes frequently fake death - **extremely** convincingly!
- Envenomation can happen even after a snake is dead under some conditions.
- Some snakes can spit/spray venom up to 3 meters with devastating accuracy!



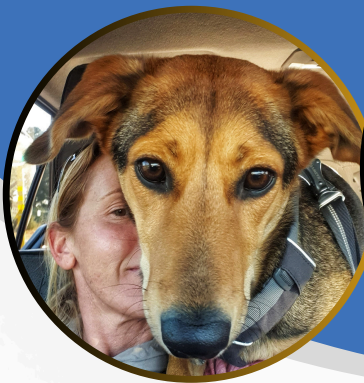
- Scorpions fluoresce/glow under UV/Black light. Invest in a UV torch to see them more easily after dark.
- Envenomation can occur even after a scorpion is dead under some conditions
- Some species of scorpion can effectively spray venom up to 30cms!

Snake Expert

Chris Cooke - Owner/Director/Herpetologist - Hoedspruit Reptile Centre
www.hoedspruitreptilecentre.com
Contact for all reptile related matters

Scorpion Expert

With thanks to Jonathan Leeming
www.scorpions.co.za
www.jonathanleeming.com



FROM THE DOG TRAINER



Keeping pets safe around snakes and scorpions is the sole responsibility of the guardian. The only way to guarantee your pet's safety is to prevent them from getting too close to a scorpion or snake.

Focus here is on things that can help to keep your dog safe around snakes and scorpions

Pay attention to what your dog is doing

- **Teach a rock solid recall**

This takes practice, work and time, but could save your dogs life in many situations

- **Keep your dog on a lead** if you want to give them more freedom, use a soft 5-8mtr long line/horse lunge line
Snakes and scorpions will often try to move away, but they cannot outpace a running dog!
- If you are not prepared to keep your dog on lead, **keep your dog close to you**
If an interaction or envenomation happens, you will know about it and be able to respond accordingly
- If you and your dog need to be outside after dark, **always check with a torch** and keep a regular lookout
Check outside with a torch before letting your dog out for their last toilet at night

See "FROM THE VET" section for signs of envenomation and what to do in an emergency
See "FROM THE SNAKE/SCORPION EXPERT" section for advice for how to minimise risk



- 🐾 Stay on established paths to ensure best visibility
- 🐾 Walk on busier trails as footfall may have encouraged scorpions and snakes to leave
- 🐾 Know when you are most likely to encounter snakes and scorpions (see "EXPERT" advice)
- 🐾 Avoid letting your dog investigate holes, logs or rocks (even if they love it!)
- 🐾 **Never** encourage or allow pets to investigate, chase, catch or kill snakes or scorpions

KNOW THE RISK



Know the different species that may be encountered in the area you live
If you travel, check what species may be found in new areas that you visit

REDUCE THE RISK



If there are high risk species present, adjust your thinking and activities accordingly

Training cues to teach your dog

Come = return to me IMMEDIATELY
Leave it = do not engage with that thing
Drop = spit that thing out of your mouth
Emergency stop = freeze/stop moving

Also consider:

Use reward-based training to teach your dog to be calm and relaxed when both wearing a muzzle and being in a crate. This will reduce both dog and human stress should they need treatment

If you live in a high risk area, consider a reward-based snake avoidance training workshop, either online or in person. Teach your dog to actively choose to move away from snakes without relying on human instructions

*Some snake aversion training uses shock collars to teach dogs to fear snakes. Results are unpredictable: electric shock training can cause some dogs to become fearful or aggressive, and might make them even more likely to attack snakes