**CAP health & wellness handout: Snakebite**

Of the venomous snakes, most are pit vipers.

Pit Vipers

Rattlesnakes

Copperheads

Water Moccasins

Coral Snakes

**How do we tell the difference between venomous and non-venomous snakes?**

Non-venomous snakes have an oval shaped head and a round pupil (dark spot on eye). There are multiple rows of teeth found in nonvenomous snakes.

Pit vipers have a triangular or arrowhead shaped head, an elliptical pupil, and a pit or hole between the eye and the nostril. Pit vipers have two fangs.

**Where do we find snakes?**

Common places to encounter snakes are in a woodpile, along a log, in a recess in a rocky area, or in the water.

Snakes can be avoided by not placing hands and feet under rocks, stepping over logs and avoiding places where snakes sun themselves.

**Who gets bitten?**

Intentionally interfering with snake results in bites of upper extremities

Accidental bites mostly occur in the foot and ankle

**Signs and symptoms of venomous snake bite**

* + Severe pain at site of bite
  + Redness and swelling
  + Bruising
  + Puncture wound
  + Numbness and tingling
  + Nausea or vomiting
  + Breathing difficulty
  + Rapid heartbeat
  + Vision disturbances

**Treatment of snakebite**

* Don't let victim be bitten again
* Prevent rescuers from being bitten
* Lay the patient down
* Place the bitten extremity at the level of the heart
* Calm and reassure patient
* Treat the wound
* Remove tight clothing and jewelry as the extremity will swell
* Apply a splint
* Evacuate the patient on a stretcher
* Call 911

**Things NOT to do**

* Molest the snake
* Apply a tourniquet
* Use a suction device
* Make cuts at the bite wound (No “X” cuts over the bite)
* Suck out the venom
* Apply ice to wound
* Give the patient any form of alcohol

**If the snake is killed**

* Do NOT touch the head or you may be bitten!
* Take the body of the snake to the hospital

***Recommendations:***

* Do not disturb any snakes you may encounter in the field
* Give them a wide berth
* Provide effective first aid care to anyone bitten by a snake
* Promptly seek medical attention for the injured person
* Armed with the knowledge imparted by this lecture you can effectively reassure the victim and treat his injuries