

Don't let the warm weather leave you snakebitten

May 25 2014



If bitten, call 911 but keep the snake away from the ER.

(HealthDay)—The arrival of warm weather means that snakes will be making their appearance, so you should take steps to prevent snakebites, an expert says.

The University of Alabama at Birmingham recently treated its first snakebite case of the season, noted Dr. Janyce Sanford, chair of the university's department of [emergency medicine](#).

"That is a usual pattern. As soon as the weather starts to warm up, [snakes](#) begin to get active and we begin seeing a bite or two. Still, we only see a few each spring, and people have a much greater chance of being stung by a bee or wasp or being bitten by a tick than being bitten by a snake," Sanford said in a university news release.

If you're in the woods or near rivers and creeks, keep an eye out for snakes and wear boots and long pants, she warned. It's also a good idea to carry a cellphone.

"Get to an emergency department as quickly as you safely can, and that can often be accomplished by calling 911," Sanford said. "Snap a picture of the snake with the [cell phone](#) if possible, but leave the snake behind. The last thing we need in a crowded emergency room is a snake, dead or alive."

Emergency doctors do not need to see the snake that caused the bite. A large number of bites are dry—with no venom injected—or are from nonpoisonous snakes, Sanford noted. By monitoring the wound for a few hours, doctors can tell if venom is present, and appropriate antivenin can then be given to the patient.

Most [snakebites](#) are not fatal. Those at higher risk include the elderly, very young children and people with underlying medical problems, Sanford said.

More information: The U.S. National Library of Medicine has more about [snakebites](#).

Copyright © 2014 [HealthDay](#). All rights reserved.

Citation: Don't let the warm weather leave you snakebitten (2014, May 25) retrieved 20 March 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-05-dont-weather-snakebitten.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.
