Numbness
Low blood pressure
Trouble breathing
Vomiting
Confusion
Increased heart rate

How the Poison Center Can Help
- Need medical attention immediately? Call 911. You can reach the poison center by calling 1-800-222-1222. Program the number into your phone for quick access during an emergency.

First Aid Recommendations
You’ve probably heard some advice about what to do if bitten by a snake. Unfortunately, not all steps people take to treat a snake bite make the situation better.

If bitten...
DO:
- Sit down and stay calm.
- Gently wash the area with warm, soapy water.
- Remove jewelry or tight clothing anywhere near the bite site.
- Keep the bitten area still, if possible, and raise it to heart level.
- Call the Oklahoma Center for Poison and Drug Information:
  1-800-222-1222

DO NOT:
- Cut the bitten area to try to drain the venom. This can worsen the injury.
- Try to remove the venom by either sucking it out or using a suction device.
- Ice the area. Icing causes additional tissue damage.
- Apply a tourniquet or any tight bandage.
- It’s safer to let it go. The venom will usually drain into your bloodstream and takes time to reach your organs. If you're aware of a venomous snake, keep a distance and call for help.

If a snakebite victim is having chest pain, difficulty breathing, face swelling or has lost consciousness, call 911 immediately!
How can I tell which snakes have venom and which don’t?

Some of a snake’s natural features can help determine if it has venom or not. However, it’s safest to consider ALL snakes as potentially dangerous. The Oklahoma Center for Poison and Drug Information doesn’t recommend getting within five feet of any snake.

### Copperhead

*Agkistrodon contortrix*

- **Characteristics**
  - Dark brown, hourglass-shaped pattern
  - Young copperheads have yellow or green tails.
- **Typical adult length**
  - 2 to 3 feet
- **Habitat**
  - Everywhere
- **Defenses**
  - Camouflaging, vibrating the tail, releasing musk, biting
- **Bite severity**
  - Copperhead bites can be severe but generally not as bad as other Oklahoma snakes. About half of all copperhead bites result in only mild swelling and pain.

### Cottonmouth

*Agkistrodon piscivorus*

- **Characteristics**
  - Dark bands on dark or olive skin, white inside of mouth
  - Young cottonmouths are lighter and look similar to copperheads.
- **Typical adult length**
  - 3 feet
- **Habitat**
  - Prefers fresh water but also can be found on land
- **Defenses**
  - Camouflaging, fleeing, opening the mouth widely, flattening the body to appear bigger, vibrating the tail, releasing musk, biting
- **Bite severity**
  - Cottonmouth bites have about the same level of severity as copperhead bites.

### Western Diamond-backed Rattlesnake

*Crotalus atrox*

- **Characteristics**
  - Dark diamond pattern outlined in white on gray skin, “raccoon-striped” tail, rattle
- **Typical adult length**
  - 3 to 6 feet
- **Habitat**
  - Dry areas, including mountains, prairies, rocky canyons
- **Defenses**
  - Camouflaging, fleeing, rattling their tail (sometimes)
- **Bite severity**
  - Bites from rattlesnakes are usually more severe than bites from copperheads and are a medical emergency.

### Timber Rattlesnake (also known as a Velvet Tail)

*Crotalus horridus*

- **Characteristics**
  - Rattle, varies in color, dark bands on a lighter skin
- **Typical adult length**
  - 4 feet
- **Habitat**
  - Wooded areas
- **Defenses**
  - Camouflaging, rattling their tail (sometimes)
- **Bite severity**
  - Bites from timber rattlesnakes are usually more severe than bites from copperheads and are a medical emergency.

### Western Pygmy Rattlesnake

*Sistrurus miliarius*

- **Characteristics**
  - Dark spotted pattern on gray, pinkish or red skin, rattle
- **Typical adult length**
  - 1 to 2 feet
- **Habitat**
  - Mixed pine-hardwood forests, borders of cypress ponds, near lakes and marshes
- **Defenses**
  - Camouflaging, rattling their tail (sometimes), which sounds like a buzz
- **Bite severity**
  - Bites from rattlesnakes are usually more severe than bites from copperheads and are a medical emergency.

### Snakes with Venom (venomous)

- Diamond or triangle-shaped head
- Elliptical or “cat-like” pupils
- Long fangs that can be folded at the roof of the mouth
- Pits that sense heat located below the eyes
- May have a rattle

### Snakes without Venom (non-venomous)

- Smooth head that is shaped like the body
- Round pupils
- No fangs; small teeth instead
- No pits
- No rattle

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For more information about snake identification, visit OKSnakes.org

For additional information on poisons, visit our website at OklahomaPoison.org