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## Snakebite Information

### Symptoms:

Snakebite is not easy to diagnose but any or all of the following can occur:

Restless & excited at first, then quieter and more depressed; later incoordination of movement is followed by collapse. Skin is cold, the pupils dilate and the animal will not respond to stimuli such as pinching or pricking. Muscular twitching and convulsions may precede death.

In cats the early signs you will most commonly see are dilated pupils, increasing incoordination (especially of the hind legs) and a strange sounding "meow".

Dogs may initially collapse, and then seem to recover. It is important that they are seen ASAP as a second collapse occurs shortly afterwards and death follows this if not treated promptly.

### What to do immediately:

Call the vet immediately and if advised to bring your pet to the clinic, keep them quiet and still as exercise increases the rate of absorption of the venom. If possible advise the vet of what type of snake it was (eg, Brown, Tiger, Red-bellied). Generally in this area 95% of bites we see are Brown snakes but Tiger snakes are possible for people living close to the river. 90% of cats we see have been bitten up to 12 hours earlier so getting to the vet quickly is vital as body temperature is often critically low.

### What will happen in the clinic?

In the consult room you will be advised of your pets' symptoms, condition and options will be given to you for treatment including antivenom. Cost will be discussed with you at this point also.

In the treatment room your pet will receive intravenous fluids immediately, antivenom will be administered as soon as possible and they will receive oxygen support if needed.

Careful monitoring and supportive treatment of your pet will take place until they are able to eat and drink by themselves and stand unassisted – this can take 2-3 days and occasionally longer.

### Environmental factors:

- Mow grasses around your property
- Clean up rubbish where snakes may find shelter
- Take measures against mice and rats (without creating another hazard with baits)
- Don't have still areas of water eg. Ponds
- Be aware that snakes can be very active in early spring when first coming out of hibernation and that a snake, no matter what size, can be poisonous
- Keep the vet clinic number handy – 08 8531 4000

If you have any further questions please make an appointment with your Veterinarian or ask one of our friendly staff members.

[Click here to contact the clinic](#)