

SNAKES: MESSAGES

LAST UPDATE: MARCH 2022

About the Message Library

People affected by disaster must have access to timely, appropriate and accurate information to help them keep themselves and their families safe and well. They should know their rights, entitlements and be able to give feedback. Responders have a duty to put in place appropriate, systematic and coordinated mechanisms to ensure this.

Our Message Library offers clear, concise and simple messages on a range of topics as templates for you to adapt and use in the context you are working in. These are intended to help you make a quick start on communicating with communities while you further develop mechanisms for on-going dialogue with diverse groups within each community.

For help contextualising and using the messages we recommend you do our e-learning course and read the following technical guidance.

E-learning

<https://kayaconnect.org/course/info.php?id=768>

Guidance

<https://www.cdacnetwork.org/tools-guidance/cdac-message-library-user-guidance>

Snake alert

Watch out for snakes during or after the rains. This is when they appear more frequently.

Who should handle snakes

Only people who are snake experts should handle snakes. An apparently dead snake should be handled with great care as it may still be alive and even when dead may inflict a reflex bite. If you see a dead snake, contact someone in your village/area who knows how to handle snakes.

How to prevent snake bites

Wear shoes or boots and ankle length clothes when walking or working in areas where snakes are likely to be found, because most snake bites are on the leg. Carry a stick when walking in snake-infested areas, and use it to beat the grass and undergrowth in your path. At night use a light to prevent treading on snakes. Warn snakes of your approach by treading/walking heavily (snakes are relatively deaf to air-borne sounds but are sensitive to ground vibrations). Do not carelessly put your hand into anthills, holes in trees, thick undergrowth or under logs. Clear sites likely to be occupied by snakes around human dwellings. Destroy anthills and fill up holes in trees. Clear fallen trees, and do not leave logs and firewood lying around. Take care if you have to move logs, rocks and branches in the course of your work, as there may be snakes under these. Dispose of rubbish regularly, and keep your dwelling and surroundings free of rats, frogs, and lizards (snakes are attracted to these).

What to do if you have been bitten by a snake

If you have been bitten by a snake, seek medical help immediately. Avoid going to see a traditional healer or herbal medicines. Your nearest medical centre is a [insert info here].

What to do if you have been bitten by a snake (WHO guidance)

After a bite by a snake suspected of being venomous, follow these steps:

- Immediately move away from the area where the bite occurred.
- Remove anything tight from around the bitten part of the body to avoid harm if swelling occurs.
- Reassure the victim, as most venomous snake bites do not cause immediate death.
- Immobilize the person completely and transport the person to a health facility as soon as possible
- Applying pressure at the bite site with a pressure pad may be suitable in some cases.

- Avoid traditional first aid methods or herbal medicines.
- Paracetamol may be given for local pain (which can be severe).
- Vomiting may occur, so place the person on their left side in the recovery position.
- Closely monitor airway and breathing and be ready to resuscitate if necessary.

REFERENCES

For more information on this topic, we recommend you read the following references.

World Health Organization (2022). **Snakebite envenoming**
https://www.who.int/health-topics/snakebite#tab=tab_1

World Health Organization (2022). **Snakebite envenoming: factsheet**
<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/snakebite-envenoming>

HELP US KEEP THE LIBRARY UP TO DATE

If you would like to contribute to topic reviews, have found a message that needs greater clarity, or wish to create a new topic, please contact us at info@cdacnetwork.org.