

SNAKE BITES IN CATS

Recognising and Responding to a Life-Threatening Emergency

Australia is home to some of the world's most venomous snakes. Snake bites can rapidly become life-threatening and require immediate veterinary attention.



WHAT HAPPENS DURING A SNAKE BITE?

When a venomous snake bites a cat, venom enters the bloodstream and affects the nervous system, muscles, blood clotting mechanisms, and vital organs.

Without treatment, severe illness and death can occur.

Common venomous snakes include:

- Eastern Brown Snake
- Red-bellied Black Snake
- Tiger Snake
- Mulga (King Brown) Snake



DID YOU KNOW?

Cats are often bitten when they hunt, explore, or startle a snake.

Many bites occur during spring and summer when snakes are most active.

Cats may hide after a bite, so signs can be subtle at first.



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RECOGNISE THE SIGNS

Signs may develop suddenly and include:

- ✓ Weakness or collapse
- ✓ Wobbliness or difficulty walking
- ✓ Dilated pupils
- ✓ Trembling
- ✓ Vomiting
- ✓ Excessive drooling
- ✓ Rapid or laboured breathing
- ✓ Paralysis
- ✓ Collapse after brief excitement



Some cats appear to recover initially before rapidly deteriorating.

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WHY IS IT AN EMERGENCY?

Snake venom can cause:

- Paralysis
- Respiratory failure
- Internal bleeding
- Kidney damage
- Cardiovascular collapse



Immediate veterinary treatment can be life-saving.

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WHERE DO BITES OCCUR?

Common bite locations include:

- Head and face
- Neck
- Front and back legs
- Body
- Mouths



Cats are most commonly bitten while hunting or exploring.

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WHICH CATS ARE MOST AT RISK?

Higher-risk cats include:

- Young and outdoor cats
- Hunting and roaming cats
- Cats living on properties near bushland, rivers or long grass
- Curious and adventurous cats

However, any cat can be bitten.



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WHAT SHOULD I DO?

If you suspect a snake bite:

- ✓ Keep your cat calm and quiet
- ✓ Carry your cat in a towel or blanket if possible
- ✓ Contact your veterinarian immediately
- ✓ Travel directly to the clinic
- ✓ Note the snake's appearance only if safe

- ❗ Do not attempt to catch or kill the snake
- ❗ Do not apply a tourniquet
- ❗ Do not cut or suck the wound

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HOW IS A SNAKE BITE TREATED?

Treatment may include:

- ◆ Emergency stabilisation
- ◆ Intravenous fluids
- ◆ Oxygen therapy
- ◆ Snake antivenom
- ◆ Blood tests
- ◆ Hospitalisation and monitoring



Early treatment significantly improves survival rates.



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CAN SNAKE BITES BE PREVENTED?

Help reduce risk by:

- ✓ Keeping cats indoors at night and during peak activity periods
- ✓ Removing rubbish and debris
- ✓ Controlling rodents
- ✓ Keeping cats on lead in high-risk areas
- ✓ Avoiding known snake habitats
- ✓ Supervising cats outdoors



ADDITIONAL TIPS



Snake bites are most common in spring and summer.



Cats may collapse before showing other signs.



Early treatment saves lives.



Never assume your cat is safe if symptoms improve briefly.



EVERY MINUTE COUNTS

If you suspect your cat has been bitten by a snake, seek veterinary attention immediately.

Snake bites are a true emergency and delaying treatment can be fatal.



**EMERGENCY
CARE CAN
SAVE LIVES**



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