

**San Joaquin County  
Emergency Medical Services Agency****BLS Snake Bite**

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**AUTHORITY:** Health and Safety Code, Division 2.5, Sections 1797.60, 1797.80, 1797.197, 1797.197a, 1797.204, 1797.220, 1798; California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Chapter 2, Sections 100062, 100063, 100064

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**INFORMATION NEEDED:**

Type of snake or snake's appearance (shape of pupil, color, stripes or rattle).

Time of bite and type of bite (fang punctures or row of teeth marks).

Prior first-aid by patient or bystanders.

**OBJECTIVE FINDINGS:**

Mild or Non-Envenomation: No discoloration around puncture marks; minor pain or no pain after a few minutes.

Serious Envenomation: Dark discoloration around punctures; swelling at and around puncture site; severe pain; altered mental status; abnormal motor movements; low blood pressure; tachycardia; "metallic" taste; active bleeding from site, possible blistering

**TREATMENT:**

1. Ensure personal safety - ensure ALS response.
2. Primary Survey – ensure ABC's.
3. Remove rings, watches, and other jewelry which might constrict circulation.
4. DO NOT APPLY ICE.
5. Secondary Survey and Routine Medical Care.

**Serious Envenomation**

6. Avoid movement of extremity (splint) and keep at or below level of heart.
7. Monitor SpO<sub>2</sub>.
8. Administer oxygen for shortness of breath or signs of hypoxia: Oxygen 10-15 L/min via non-rebreathing mask. Patients with ineffective respirations: support ventilations with BVM and airway.
9. Circle swelling around puncture site with pen and note time.
10. Monitor distal pulses.

**Notes:**

1. Do not incise snake bites.
2. Do not apply constricting bands or tourniquets unless there is uncontrolled bleeding.

3. All patients need to be transported to a hospital for evaluation and possible antibiotic or antivenin therapy.
4. If dead or captured, have animal control transport snake for identification.

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Approved: Signature on file  
Medical Director

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