

**San Joaquin County  
Emergency Medical Services Agency**




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**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.

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Effective: April 1, 2020  
Supersedes: July 1, 2007

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Medical Director

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EMS Administrator

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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