

Rattlesnake Bite Discharge Instructions - Patients

Rattlesnake venom can lead to complex injuries. It is common for people to experience problems while they recover. Most problems are minor and easily treated. In rare cases, serious and potentially life-threatening issues have developed. We will be contacting you at specific time points after you leave the hospital to screen for any problems and track how well you are recovering. If a problem develops, we want to identify it early and help you get the best care possible.

What to Do

1. Schedule a follow-up appointment with your primary care provider **5-10 days** from the bite.
 - a. Be sure to bring the “Primary Care Provider Guidance” sheet with you
2. Report any problems to your doctor (symptoms described below).
3. Keep your wound clean by gently washing with soap and water to prevent infection
4. Things you can do to help speed up your recovery:
 - a. Return to doing normal life activities as soon as you feel well enough.
 - i. Avoid any high-risk activities that could lead to cuts, bruises, or other injuries
 - b. Start physical therapy as soon as possible.
 - c. Elevate your injured limb as much as possible until the painful swelling is gone.
5. If you are currently working, consider how your injury will affect your ability to do your job.
6. Reschedule any dental work or elective surgeries for more than 2 weeks from your snakebite.

What to Expect

1. Pain and swelling may last for several weeks.
2. It takes most people 4-12 weeks to fully recover.
3. Standing all day typically worsens swelling for leg or foot injuries.
4. Clear or bloody looking fluid may leak from fang punctures, this is normal and not concerning.
5. It is common to develop a bumpy, itchy, red rash.
6. You may have difficulty sleeping or notice that you are feeling more anxious than normal.

Watch for Problems

1. Get immediate medical help if you experience:
 - a. Significant fatigue, weakness, shortness of breath, irregular heartbeat, chest pain, coughing up blood, sudden and severe headaches, dizziness, feeling lightheaded, or blacking out.
2. The following may happen. If they do, you should let your primary care provider know as soon as possible
 - a. If your wound becomes warm, red, tender, or starts leaking pus it may have become infected.
 - b. Blisters and black areas of skin may develop, if they do, they may require specialized wound care.
 - c. Antivenom can cause muscle aches, fatigue, fever, rash, and nausea to occur in 1-3 weeks.
 - d. Bleeding complications result in large unexplained bruising, or blood in your urine and stool.

If you run into issues or have other questions, feel free to call us at [520-626-6016](tel:520-626-6016). More information about rattlesnakes, treatment, and recovery is in our monthly newsletter, “News From The Pit”. Scan the QR code or visit azpoison.com/content/news-pit

