

# Wound Care after a Rattlesnake Bite



## Rattlesnake Bite Wounds may still be Healing when You Leave the Hospital

- Small puncture holes, blisters, pain, redness, swelling, and bruising are common.
- To help recover faster, it's important to prevent it from becoming infected.
- Things that can slow healing include smoking, uncontrolled diabetes, past surgery near the wound, poor nutrition, weakened immune systems, or impaired blood flow.

## Cleaning and Covering Your Wound

- **Always wash your hands** before and after cleaning the wound.
- Do **not** put ice on the bite site.
- Gently wash with **mild soap and warm water** (do not use strong soaps, antibacterial soaps, or hydrogen peroxide)
- Pat dry with a clean towel.
- Cover with a **soft pad** (like Telfa), then **loosely wrap with gauze** to keep pad in place.
- Keep wound covered **whenever leaving your home** for the first week.
- Change the bandage every day.
- When you're at home, you can **leave the wound uncovered** to help it heal.
- If the bandage sticks to you, wet with water to loosen, do NOT rip off.
- **Do not use tight bandages**, like a Band-Aid wrapped all the way around a finger.

## If You Have Blisters – Call Us or Your Doctor if they become more Painful or get Bigger

- Keep clean using mild soap and water, then cover with soft bandage, as above.
- Blisters may leak fluids requiring more frequent cleaning and bandage changes.
- Blisters may require specialized wound care if they become too large.
- Do NOT pop or peel blisters.

## Signs of Infection – Call Us or Your Doctor if you Notice Any of the Following:

- The skin near the wound becomes **warm, painful, red**, or the **swelling** worsens.
- If you notice a **bad smell** or **white/yellow colored pus** leaking from the wound.
- If you have fevers or feel like you are getting **sick** or unusually **tired**.
- Higher than usual blood sugars if you have diabetes.

## After Two Weeks

- Usually puncture holes are closed and wounds are healing well by **10-14 days**.
- You can gently scrub the area with a **washcloth or soft toothbrush** using mild soap and water to help remove dead skin.
- If your arm or leg is still swollen **after 2 weeks**, you can wrap it gently with an **ace bandage** for light pressure.

**These recommendations are meant for simple wound care needs.  
They are not intended to replace your doctor's instructions.**