A Family Tradition



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Snake Bites

I he same simple care one takes around wasp nests and busy roads also suffices to keep the risk of snake bite to acceptable levels. Nonetheless, venomous snakes must be considered dangerous and even non-fatal bites can cause severe pain and long-lasting tissue damage. There have been many snakebite remedies over the years. Recent studies have concluded that the following protocols are best:

Stay calm, get safely away from the snake, and have someone call 9-1-1 (or the emergency number in your area). The less the victim moves the bitten site, the less likely the venom will be spread through the body and cause damage.

Have the victim lie down with the affected limb lower than the heart. Keep the limb immobilized. If practical, splint the limb.

Treat for shock and preserve body heat.

Remove any rings, bracelets, boots, or other restricting items from the bitten extremity. (It WILL swell.)

Apply a light constricting band about 2" above and below the bite, however never place the bands on either side of a joint (such as above and below the knee or elbow). This band should be made up of wide, soft material, which could be a handkerchief or shredded clothing. The band should only be as tight as the band the nurse applies when taking a blood test.

NOTE: The purpose of constricting bands is to restrict lymphatic flow, not blood, so they should not be too tight. Check pulses below the bands and readjust the bands as necessary when they tighten due to swelling.

Wash the bite with soap and water (if available).

If the victim has to walk out, sit calmly for 20-30 minutes to let the venom localize at the site, then proceed calmly to the nearest source of help and try to avoid unnecessary exertion which will stimulate circulation of the venom.

Get the victim to definitive medical care for antivenin, which will provide the greatest relief from the toxic effects of the bite.

ACTIONS TO AVOID:

DO NOT cut the bite. The additional tissue damage may actually increase the diffusion of the toxins throughout the body.

DO NOT apply a tourniquet. Such action can result in the loss of the limb.

NEVER try to suck out the venom by mouth. You can try the suction cup in a snakebite kit if it doesn't delay other needed treatment. Suctioning seldom provides any measurable advantages, however. Do not apply cold and/or ice packs. Recent studies indicate that application of cold or ice makes the injury much worse. This is for informational purposes and no liability is assumed in its use. Always consult with a competent medical professional regarding health related issues.

Animal Bites

f an animal bites you, follow these guidelines:

- For minor wounds. If the bite barely breaks the skin and there's no danger of rabies, treat it as a minor wound. Wash the wound thoroughly with soap and water. Apply an antibiotic cream to prevent infection and cover the bite with a clean bandage.
- For deep wounds. If the animal bite creates a deep puncture of the skin or the skin is badly torn and bleeding, apply pressure with a clean, dry cloth to stop the bleeding and see your doctor.
- For infection. If you notice signs of infection, such as swelling, redness, increased pain or oozing, see your doctor immediately.

For suspected rabies. If you suspect the bite was caused by an animal that might carry rabies — including any wild or domestic animal of unknown immunization status, particularly bats — see your doctor immediately.

Doctors recommend getting a tetanus shot every 10 years. If your last one was more than five years ago and your wound is deep or dirty, your doctor may recommend a booster. Get the booster as soon as possible after the injury.

Bites from nonimmunized domestic animals and wild animals carry the risk of rabies. Rabies is more common in bats, raccoons, skunks and foxes than in cats and dogs. Rabbits, squirrels and other rodents rarely carry rabies.



Harold "Skipper" Sparks born in Temple, OK, and learned noodling during the great depression. It was a way of survival then. Skipper worked in the oil field. He later moved his family



to Louisiana where he continued to worked for Noble Drilling Co. as a diesel mechanic. He medically retired with them 10 years later. They continued to live

in south Louisiana in the bayou Benoit area just outside Saint Martinsville. He and his three sons made a living off the land, gardening, hog hunting, noodling, trot



lining, and alligator hunting. They later moved back to Temple, OK, where he was the assistance manger and butcher for the Sparks IGA grocery store. He later passed away in the early 70's, after which his two sons, Bobby and Ocie continued the family tradition of noodling.

• Wildlife • • •

Large Rodents

Each can easily be identified in hand, but it can be difficult to tell them apart in their aquatic habitats. All three species have lips that close behind their large incisor teeth. This allows the mouth to be sealed off while the large incisors protrude for underwater feeding. The large incisors are constantly growing, replacing the worn surfaces caused by constant chewing. The *beaver* is the only one of the three that "fells" trees, making the presence of this large rodent easy to determine. Limbs with the bark removed, or dams and lodges constructed of limbs and mud also indicate the presence of beaver. *Muskrat* use marsh vegetation to build a characteristic lodge, smaller than that of a beaver. *Nutria* leave no telltale sign, All three species consume vegetation and leave trails and burrows. Other signs, including lodges, dens, feeding platforms, loafing areas and mud slides vary among species in size, shape, and placement, and can be used to determine which species is present.

Beaver

The largest North American rodent, can weigh up to 100 pounds but this is unusual. The usual weights for *beaver* are from 35 to 68 pounds. Typical total length for this species is from 39 to 47 inches, and the large flat tail



varies from 10 to 13 inches long and from 3.5 to 8 inches wide. The large flat tail easily identifies this species. Other identifying characteristics are the hind feet which have four webbed toes and a fifth free toe that supports an articulating split nail used for grooming. The coat consists of two layers; a coarse outer layer of guard hair, often yellowish to reddish in color, and a fine dense layer of underfur.

Biographies > > > >

Brandy Sparks



Ls a 1st generation noodler with 10 years of experience. She was the 2011 *Champion Female Noodler* in Pauls Valley, OK at the Okie Noodling Tournament. She has been featured in Okie Noodling 2, the New York Times Magazine and news articles.

Bethany Sparks

Is a future rodeo star in barrel and pole racing. She looks forward to gradating high school, going to OSU and becoming a vet. She lives in Walters. She is a 4th generation noodler. Bethany prefers to swim and spectate, however, she will get in there when needed. Bethany was the *2011 Okie Noodling Queen* in Pauls Valley, OK. She has been featured in Okie Noodling 2 and news articles.



Snakes > > >

Cottonmouth

 \mathbf{r} orty-six species of snakes are native to Oklahoma. Only seven species are harmful to humans. Venomous species are the *copperhead*, *cottonmouth*, and five *rattlesnake* varieties (the western diamondback, the timber, the prairie, western massasauga and the western pigmy).



-Rattlesnake

Cottonmouths are aquatic residents of the eastern one-third of the state and those counties along the southern boundary, west to Comanche County. Copperheads can also be



aquatic. Cottonmouths, copperheads, massasaugas and pigmy rattlesnakes are usually found in moist areas. Prairie rattlesnakes are found in the prairies of western Oklahoma while the timber rattlers inhabit the forested eastern half of the state. Western diamondbacks are most common in southern and western Oklahoma.

Copperhead

but have been found as far north as Tulsa, Cherokee and Adair counties. Rocky outcrops are the favored habitat of rattlesnakes and copperheads. These outcrops provide shelter, basking and possible hibernation sites.



There are five features that can help you identify poisonous snakes:

- Presence of rattles on the tail positively identifies a snake as poisonous.
- Head shape can help identify poisonous snakes. Poisonous snakes in North American tend to have diamond or triangular shaped heads. Harmless snakes have narrow heads.
- Vertical eye pupils (cat's eyes) are a strong sign a snake might be poisonous.
- The best identifying character is the facial pit. This is a de-pression on the side of the face joint below a line between the eves and the nostrils. The venomous snakes of Oklahoma have facial pits.
- If you have a dead snake a poisonous snake can be identified by examining the scales under the tail. The tail of a snake is the portion of the snake that extend beyond the vent or anus, while non-poisonous snakes usually have two rows of scales beyond the vent.

Rattlesnake Non Poisonon Rattles Head

Cat's Eyes



Where to > > > > > > > Noodle

Places to look can be about anywhere, but some of the best places will be

- Rocky shores of lakes, creeks, rivers.
- Old building foundations or concrete floors that have been overtaken by damming a lake or river.
- Old demo sites where new bridges have been built.
- Anywhere someone has to rip rap to stop soil erosion.
- Log jams, brush piles, and boat ramps

These places offer great hiding places for big fish. However, they offer big hazards like shifting concrete, rebar, reptiles, and rodents. Be aware of the regulations in that area, and special restriction, like no swimming, or size limits.

Safety

Safety is all about situational awareness and common sense. Always have someone there with you. Keep an eye out for reptiles, rodents, and other signs of wildlife that maybe indigenous to the area you are Noodling. It is wise not to go anywhere with alligators. They can be almost anywhere these days. Check with your local wildlife department for things of that nature. Learn all you can before you go, like beaver slides, cuttings, and how fish holes differ from other types. Remember safety first, and your extremities are fearless. They will go anywhere you stick them. It is always best to have a guide your first few trips. No fish is worth your life.

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