

Lions, Tigers and Snakes, Oh My

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Any time one resides in the country wildlife is bound to be present. Here at Rabbit Run Mini-Farm we have an abundance of rabbits and deer. These are relatively harmless creatures whose only crime will likely be to eat our vegetables, and destroy our garden. On the other hand, we have also encountered some common run of the mill snakes. Although I personally do not care for the slithering things they are in general harmless as well. I look at this as one of those hazards that one would encounter according to the location and the season of the year.

Under normal conditions your chances of getting bit by one of these creatures is extremely slim. First off, unless you have encountered a Black mamba most snakes will attempt to escape from an encounter with humans. I have already experienced just such an event since moving here. They are just as scared of us as we may be of them. Even when traveling in any snake infested territory your chances of getting bit are slim if you are familiar with snakes at all.

Notice I said usually for it is entirely possible to be bite and in such a case you should know what to do in order to minimize the impact from the snake. Generally, deaths resulting from snakes are frequently rare, at least in our part of the country. Usually over

half of the victims who have been bite have no poison in their system what so ever while only a third will develop any sort of serious poisoning. The biggest downfall of a snake bite is the decrease in morale or in the event that no one knows how to deal with the issue when it is encountered. As a homeowner with snakes around we must be familiar with the necessary step involved in treating the bites in order to limit the damage to tissues around the snakebite area.

Always look at any bite whether it is from snake, animal or human as a potential source of infection. A snake does not need to be poisonous in order to infect a person from its bite. For those snakes which are of a poisonous nature the venom will quickly attack the central nervous system, and seriously hamper the blood circulation, but will also be affected by the digestive enzymes which aid the snake in digesting their prey. The poisons found in some snakes can cause large areas of tissue damage resulting in large open wound spaces. If the bites are untreated these conditions can lead to possible amputation of the limb as well as the development of shock, or panic within the person bitten by the snake.

Factors which can affect the successful recovery of a bite victim are undue excitement, or hysteria which can elevate the circulation within the body, and cause the toxin to be distributed quicker. The signs of shock often occur within 30 minutes of being bit.

Prior to beginning any snake bite treatment, we must determine whether or not the snake was poisonous. Bites experienced from a nonpoisonous snake usually show rows of teeth. Those bites from the poisonous snake will not only show rows of teeth but also several puncture marks created by the penetration of the fangs. A poisonous snake bite will cause bleeding from both the nose and the anus; it is likely that you will find blood within the urine, extreme pain at the location of the bite contributing to considerable swelling. These symptoms will appear anytime from 2 minutes to 2 hours after the snake has bit you.

With a poisonous snake bite, you will find it difficult to breath, you will feel paralysis setting in, get extremely weak, start twitching and your body will begin to get numb. The following steps should be taken immediately:

Keep the victim still and treat for shock while forcing fluids into him. Remove any constricting items such as rings, watches, etc. Clean the area of the bite well. If breathing is starting to get difficult maintain an airway and if necessary, administer CPR. Use some form of constricting band between the heart and the bite wound.

Never provide the victim with alcohol, or tobacco products. Don't provide the patient with any kind of morphine and avoid making deep cuts on the bite.