



Hazard Alert — First Aid for Snake Bites

Snake Encounters

The risk of encountering a snake while working around imported goods is extremely low.

Live snakes have, however, occasionally arrived in New Zealand in sea containers and associated with imported goods.

Australian snakes are the most likely snakes to arrive in New Zealand and some Australian snakes are extremely venomous.

Always be aware that snakes may be present and be on the lookout! If you encounter a snake, always assume that it is dangerous.

If you see a snake while unloading a container:

immediately exit and close the container doors.

If you see a snake in a crate or carton:

immediately cover or close the container. DO NOT attempt to capture or kill the snake.

For any snake sighting, call the MAF Hotline:

0800 809 966

First Aid

In the unlikely event of a person being bitten by a snake, the aim of first aid is to slow down the progress of the venom.

- Apply a firm broad bandage or similar (even clothing strips or panty hose will do in an emergency) over the bite site. The bandage should be firm but not so firm that it cuts off blood circulation.
- Call for emergency medical services to come to the victim on site.
- Apply further bandages over as much of the rest of the bitten limb as practical. It is often easiest to go over the top of clothing rather than move the limb to remove clothing.
- Ensure the bitten limb is kept motionless by applying a splint and instructing the patient to lie completely still until help arrives.

Polyvalent antivenom and snake venom detection kits are stored at the Auckland Hospital Pharmacy and are available 24 hours a day seven days a week by telephone at the following:

During normal business hours:
09 307 4949 extn 6030, 7390 or 6025

After hours:
09 367 0000, ask for the duty manager
For general 24-hour poisons advice, phone:
0800 POISON or 0800 764 766