

Camping Safety

Myth: Treat a poisonous snake bite by cutting the wound and sucking out the venom.

Answer: Wrong! Do not cut the wound, do not attempt to suck out the venom, do not apply ice, do not apply a tourniquet and do not use electric shock. Wash the wound. Keep bitten part still and lower than the heart. Call 9-1-1 or local emergency number immediately. If professional medical care is not accessible within 30 minutes, consider suctioning the wound using a snake bite kit. People at-risk of snake bites (those in the wild and away from medical care) should carry a snake bite kit, available at camping and wilderness equipment stores and know how to use its contents.

General Camping Safety

- Review the equipment and supplies needed, particularly in case of an emergency. Recommended items include a cell phone or other means of communication, such as a two-way radio, compass, first aid kit, food and water, flashlight, matches, insect repellent, radio with batteries and emergency signaling devices (whistle, pocket mirror, foil), map and sunscreen.
- Before going, check weather conditions and be sure to leave a copy of trip itinerary with family or friends.
- It's safest to hike or camp with at least one companion. If entering a remote area, the group should have a minimum of four people; this way, if one is hurt, another can stay with the victim while two go for help. If going into an unfamiliar area, take along someone who knows the area or at least get this information from those who do before setting out.
- After being outdoors or if outdoors for a long period, perform a tick check. Shower immediately after coming indoors. Remove any ticks by doing the following:
 - Using a pair of fine-tipped tweezers, grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible and pull slowly, steadily, and firmly. Avoid crushing the tick's body.
 - Once removed, clean the area with antiseptic, such as alcohol.
 - Save the tick in a jar of alcohol or taped it to a piece of cardboard so it can be identified by the local health department.

Dehydration

- Drink lots of water. Carry water or juice and drink continuously even if not thirsty. Avoid alcohol and caffeine, which dehydrate the body.
- Avoid heavy exertion in the heat of the day.
- Take frequent rest breaks.

When Help is Delayed—Wilderness First Aid

- The ideal thing is to have help come to the victim. Attempt to call for advanced medical help using an emergency communication system – either a cell phone or two-way radio. If help cannot come, the main goal is to get the victim to advanced help and do no further harm.
- For suspected sprains or broken bones, immobilize the injured area by making a splint from whatever resources are available, such as rolled up clothing or blankets and small branches and bandages from the first aid kit.
- Provide assistance to the victim as move out of the wilderness. For example, create a 'cane' from a walking assist or use the helper's body as support.
- Attempt to delay the onset of more serious conditions such as shock by maintaining a normal body temperature – do not overheat or over cool the victim. Also, if the victim is fully alert and able, keep them hydrated.