



10877 Conductor Blvd., Suite 400  
Sutter Creek, California 95685  
Phone (209) 223-6407  
Fax (209) 223-1562

## Press Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Contact:** Diana Evensen, MSPH  
Amador County Public Health  
Public Information Officer

### Rattlesnake Awareness

**Sutter Creek, CA** – Two people in Amador County required treatment at Sutter Amador Hospital for rattlesnake bites in separate incidents earlier this week.

“Both of those individuals were admitted to the hospital and required anti-venom treatment,” according to Dr. Rita Kerr, Amador County Health Officer.

It has been suggested that there may be more rattlesnakes this year because of the late, wet spring and more small rodents which are their main source of food. Most bites occur on the hand, when the person is attempting to pick up the snake or working in brush or wood piles.

Symptoms are usually pain and stinging at the site, swelling, oozing of blood from bite and bruising. Sometimes a person will have a metallic or mint taste in the mouth or muscle twitching.

There about 8000 venomous snake bites per year in the United States. Only about 5 to 6 people die from rattlesnake bites per year.

If bitten, the best thing you can do is get to the emergency room right away. Fortunately Sutter Amador Hospital keeps an adequate supply of anti-venom on hand. It is also important to remain calm, remove jewelry and constrictive clothing, and immobilize the limb in a level position at or below the level of the heart. Do not cut or suck the bite area. Do not apply ice. Do not apply a tourniquet.

The anti-venom is very effective and most victims require 6 to 10 vials given intravenously. The hospital stay is 1 to 2 days and most people recover without long lasting effects.

Dr. Kerr adds that, “The only rattlesnake native to this area is the Northern Pacific Rattlesnake. Therefore, it’s not important to catch the snake. Actually it is more dangerous to attempt that. When someone brings a rattlesnake to the emergency room it stirs up a little commotion.”

Bite prevention is the best medicine:

- Never handle snakes – dead or alive.
- Know the habitat where the snakes live: wood piles, brush.
- Know snake habits – out more at dusk & dawn.
- Keep rattlesnake enemies around: dogs, cats, guinea hens, and pigs.
- Wear boots and long pants.

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