



OUTDOOR



WATER



TRAVEL



SLEEP

## Sea to Summit advice for Australian snake bite prevention and treatment



We regularly receive questions about the prevention and treatment of snake bites in Australia. This sheet can help you understand snake behaviour and avoid dangerous situations. The following information has been offered by Bob Cooper, an Australian expert in reptiles and outback survival.

NB: These guidelines are relevant for Australian snakes species and are intended as guidelines only.

### Prevention better than cure:

- Do not approach a snake: it doesn't know what your intention is, and that you are just observing or trying to help.
- You can make a snake very scared by pointing and waving your arms in the air above the snake, so instead, keep your movements calm and slow. Also, don't raise your feet up in front of the snake - that will provoke a strike.
- Wear closed-in footwear at all times when bushwalking and preferably wear long trousers and/or gaiters.
- Use a dead stick or trekking pole to probe long grass as you walk through, as this will encourage the snake to move out of your path.
- Do not cast a shadow onto a snake as that will make it nervous.

### Gaiter advice:

There are 30 species of snakes in Australia that are considered to have life-threatening venom. Fortunately these belong to one group of snakes known as elapids, meaning they have fixed front fangs. The average length would be 4-6mm on a metre long snake and up to 12mm on a very large snake. These relatively small fangs means that by wearing gaiters you can greatly decrease the chance of a snake successfully piercing you skin.

Sea to Summit offer a large range of gaiters which will help prevent a bite, but can never offer 100% protection against snake bites. The most densely woven, puncture resistant gaiter currently made by Sea to Summit is the Quagmire Canvas Gaiter. The Quagmire provides at least 39cm coverage up your leg delivering peace of mind no matter where you are bushwalking.

For more information on gaiters, see: [www.seatosummit.com.au](http://www.seatosummit.com.au) and search Gaiters



Quagmire Canvas Gaiter

### Treatment method: source 'Outback Survival' by Bob Cooper (2012)



"I believe the pressure and immobilisation technique (PIT) is the most effective first-aid treatment for all venomous land and sea snake bites in Australia and other elapid snakes worldwide. To my knowledge there have been no reported deaths once this bandaging has been applied. The short fangs of the elapid snake deliver the venom into our lymphatic system and not directly into our blood stream. The bandaging slows the venom movement and absorption rate down to as much as one twentieth, buying the victim much more time to get to hospital."

Written by Bob Cooper



Three rolls of bandages are required to effectively bandage an adult leg.

To learn how to perform the PIT method, read 'Outback Survival' by Bob Cooper (2012)

Bob Cooper Snake Bite and Venomous Creatures Kit



## Facts about snakes: *source Bob Cooper - [www.bobcoopersurvival.com](http://www.bobcoopersurvival.com)*

We have about 30 species of snakes in Australia that are dangerous to humans, they all belong to a family called Elapid – which means they all have fixed front fangs, the two canines are the only teeth producing venom.

Most don't have true hypodermic fangs but they are so close to being hollow that their delivery system is nearly as good.

The fact that they can all bite a flat surface means when they strike, they open their mouth up very wide to ensure a strike on their target – but they snap their mouth shut on first contact with the target. This means for us, they will often bite our trousers, clothing, boots or gaiters rather than our legs. This is the reason long furred cats and dogs attacking snakes often do not get envenomed.

There is no such thing as an aggressive snake - they are all acting in defense.

90% of the approx 3000 bites a year in Australia are on people trying to catch the snake.

90% of those bites are on hands or feet. 7% are treading on snakes and the other 3% is made up of putting hands in the wrong place and or sitting on them.

90% do not require anti venom because the snake is striking in defense and not a predator strike which is when they will "hang on" to their prey.

The pressure and immobilisation bandaging treatment is extremely effective, I believe no one has died in Australia once this had been applied in the first instance. Treat all bites as serious.

## Other products available:

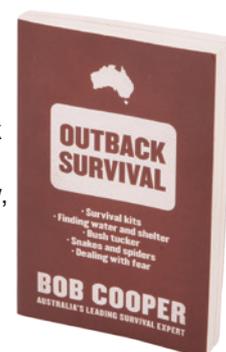
### Bob Cooper Survival Kit

Designed and tested in the outback, the kit's quality components have been selected specifically to be the most versatile and effective system for survival.



### Outback Survival Book

This book tells you what you need to do, and how, if you want to survive.



## Emergency numbers:

**Metro Areas** call 000 for medical assistance

### Royal Flying Doctors Service

West Australia 24 hour medical and emergency information 1800 625 800 (satellite phones call 08 9417 6389)

South Australia and Northern Territory 24 hour medical and emergency information call the Port Augusta base on 08 8648 9555. For all of SA and in NT everything south of Tennant Creek in Darwin dial 000

Queensland Brisbane, Bundaberg, Rockhampton or Townsville dial 000.

Charleville Base 07 4654 1443 - 24 hour emergency patient transfers

Mt Isa Base 07 4743 2802

Cairns Base 07 4040 0500

NSW, Victoria or Tasmania Call the Broken Hill Base on 08 8088 1188