



## Rattlesnake Envenomation

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Rattlesnakes can be terrifying and dangerous, especially for our pets and horses. Snake-bites occur frequently, and can happen year round in the Arizona Desert Southwest. Rattlesnakes are not usually aggressive, but often will strike if pursued or if they are cornered. There are several different varieties of rattlesnakes in the Sonoran desert including the Western Diamondback and the Mohave. For more information on Rattlesnakes please click link below:

[https://www.desertmuseum.org/books/nhsd\\_rattlesnakes3.php](https://www.desertmuseum.org/books/nhsd_rattlesnakes3.php)

Dogs and horses are especially prone to rattlesnake bites, as both species are naturally curious.

Most dogs struck by a rattlesnake are observed by owners to be interacting with the snake, or observed directly following. Dogs can be rushed to clinics for treatment, which often can save their lives. Rapid treatment in a rattlesnake bite case is essential. Antivenin can be administered to help neutralize the toxin. We also administer tailored antihistamine and anti-inflammatory medications that can help to keep your pet comfortable. The location of the bite, as well as the level of toxin released from the snake, will determine prognosis for your pet.



Horses are often struck on the nose, or the face region, resulting in profound and rapid swelling that can affect their airway function. It is also common for horses to be struck lower on the limb, while on a ride or trail, as they step near a sleeping or sunbathing snake.

Where dogs are usually noted observed rapidly after envenomation, horses are often not seen until after several hours. It is common for owners to come home from work to find their horse has profound swelling of or come out in the morning after

their horse has been struck overnight. Rapid treatment in horses is also essential, so be sure to contact your veterinarian as soon as possible for treatment. In horses we can also administer antivenin depending on the severity and location of the strike.

A recent case was a miniature horse who owners noted to have profound swelling, bleeding and difficulty eating on their return from work. He was rushed into the clinic where he was treated with Rattler Antivenin IV by Mg Biologics. Please click link below for more information on this product.



<https://www.mgbiologics.com/products/rattler-antivenin/>

Horses are also administered a number of other supportive care options, and the severity of the trauma dictates the treatment. His owner's diligence and rapid treatment ensured that this horse recovered rapidly.

Horses are also especially prone to secondary side effects from rattlesnake bites, as the toxin released targets the muscle of the heart. The risk of secondary side effects are low in dry bite cases, but in a full envenomation we can see cardiac side effects even years later.

Please be mindful of snakebites for yourself, your pets and your horses and be sure to call us immediately with any concerns or if you believe your pet may have been bitten by a snake.