

# SNAKE BITE



## Managing a snake bite

### Signs & symptoms

- puncture marks or scratches
- nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea
- headache
- double or blurred vision
- drooping eyelids
- bleeding from the site
- breathing difficulties
- drowsiness, giddiness or faintness
- problems speaking or swallowing
- pain in the throat, chest or abdomen
- respiratory weakness or arrest
- dark urine

### WARNING

**DO NOT** wash venom off the skin

**DO NOT** cut the bitten area

**DO NOT** try to suck venom out of wound

**DO NOT** use a tourniquet

**DO NOT** try to catch the snake

### Management

#### 1. Follow DRSABCD

#### 2. Rest and reassure the patient

#### 3. Apply a pressure immobilisation bandage

- if on a limb, apply a broad pressure bandage over the bite site as soon as possible
- apply a firm heavy crepe or elasticised roller bandage starting just above the fingers or toes, and moving upwards on the limb as far as can be reached (include the snake bite)
- apply tightly without stopping blood supply to the limb

#### 4. Splint the bandaged limb

#### 5. Ensure the patient does not move

#### 6. Write down the time of the bite and when the bandage was applied

- stay with the patient
- check circulation in fingers or toes

In an emergency, call triple zero (000) for an ambulance

For more information on St John first aid training and kits, visit [www.stjohn.org.au](http://www.stjohn.org.au) or freecall 1300 360 455

© St John Ambulance Australia, 2010. This information may not be copied or reproduced without prior written permission. This information is NOT a substitute for first aid training. St John recommends that everyone is trained in first aid.