

## Safety Spotlight: Snake Bite and Scorpion Sting



by Scott Cosby

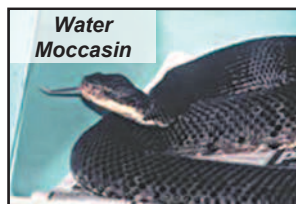
In a previous article, I presented problem insects and their bites, along with the best treatment for them. During my time in the field, I saw snakes and avoided them, but I have experienced being stung by a scorpion, and it was painful. This article will focus on the bite and sting by a snake and scorpion occasionally encountered in the field, as well as the best treatments.

Oklahoma has several species of snakes. The majority of them are nonpoisonous. The bite of a nonpoisonous snake can be a combination of puncture wound and/or laceration, causing pain and infection. The bite from a nonpoisonous snake depends on the size of the snake; and its teeth will have a lot to do with how much damage can be done to a person.

### Nonpoisonous Snake Treatment:

- (1) Irrigate the bite with clean water.
- (2) Clean the wound with a mild antibacterial soap.
- (3) Dry the wound by blotting it with a soft, dry cloth or towel.
- (4) Don't bandage the wound unless there is a risk of contamination.

The diamondback rattlesnake, cottonmouth (or water moccasin), and copperhead are the three poisonous species in the state. These bites include a puncture wound and/or laceration, and the venom can cause serious illness and even death if not treated.



### Poisonous Snake Treatment:

Immediate medical attention is the most primary treatment! Others can include:

- (1) Removing all constrictive clothing and items near the bite area.
- (2) If possible, clean the wound with soap and water.
- (3) Keep the bite victim calm.
- (4) Keep the bite at the heart's level.

There are scorpions in Oklahoma, and the most common is about two inches\* long. A scorpion sting can be home treated without having to go to a hospital. The sting of the Oklahoma species of scorpion is not considered to be lethal and rarely causes problems. A scorpion usually avoids humans, and will not sting unless handled, stepped on, or otherwise bothered.

### Scorpion Sting Treatment:

- (1) Clean the sting area with soap and water.
- (2) Next, apply a cool compress.
- (3) If the pain is too much, an over-the-counter pain reliever may be helpful, but a physician should be consulted first.
- (4) If the sting area swells, pain persists, or breathing becomes difficult, seek immediate medical attention.



Scorpion

The best overall advice for encounters with nonpoisonous or poisonous snakes and scorpions is to make every attempt to avoid them. Consult your local health professional for more information. There are also a wide variety of sources on the Internet.

\*(1 inch ≈ 2.54 centimeters)

Scott

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Enfoque de Seguridad:  
Mordedura de Serpiente y Picadura de Escorpión

por Scott Cosby



Hector Leos  
Translator

En un artículo previo, presente el problema de las picaduras de insectos, al igual del mejor tratamiento para ellas. Durante mi tiempo trabajando, vi serpientes y las eludí, pero he tenido la experiencia de ser picado por un escorpión, y fue muy doloroso. Este artículo se enfocara en la mordedura de serpiente y picada de escorpión ocasionalmente encontrados en el campo de trabajo, al igual de la mejor manera de tratarlas.

Oklahoma tiene varias especies de serpientes. La mayoría de ellas no son ponzoñosas. La mordedura de una ponzoñosa puede ser una combinación de herida de pinchazo y/o laceración, causando dolor e infección. La picadura de una serpiente no ponzoñosa depende del tamaño de la serpiente; y sus dientes tendrán mucho que ver que tanto daño haga a una persona.

Cosby trans. cont'd on page 60.

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