San Mateo County Emergency Medical Services

Stings/Venomous Bites

For snake, scorpion, insect, and marine envenomation (e.g., stingrays, jelly fish), NOT for animal bites; use traumatic injury

**History**
- Type of bite or sting
- Description or photo of creature for identification, if safe to do so
- Time, location, size of bite or sting
- Previous reaction to bite or sting
- Domestic vs. wild
- Tetanus and Rabies risk
- Immunocompromised patient

**Signs and Symptoms**
- Rash, skin break, or wound
- Pain, soft tissue swelling, or redness
- Blood ooze from the bite wound
- Evidence of infection
- Shortness of breath or wheezing
- Allergic reaction, hives, or itching
- Hypotension or shock

**Differential**
- Animal bite
- Human bite
- Snake bite (poisonous)
- Spider bite (poisonous)
- Insect sting/bite (bee, wasp, ant, or tick)
- Infection risk
- Rabies risk
- Tetanus risk

**California Poison Control Center**
(800) 222-1222

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**General wound care**

**Consider, IV/IO**

**Anaphylaxis?**
- Yes → **Anaphylaxis**
- No → **Serious injury or Hypotension?**
- No → **Identification of animal, if possible**
  - Spider bite
  - Bee/wasp sting
  - Snake bite
  - Animal bite
  - Human bite
  - Marine envenomations

**Immobilize injury/limb**

**Consider, IV**

**Cardiac monitor**

**For pain consider, Fentanyl**

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**E Elevate wound location at the level of the heart**

**P Remove any constricting clothing/bands/jewelry**

**Consider, applying cold pack(s)**

**DO NOT apply COLD PACKS**

**Mark margin of swelling/redness and time**

**Notify receiving facility. Contact Base Hospital for medical direction**

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**Effective November 2018**

**Treatment Protocol E04 Page 1 of 2**
Pearls

- Poisonous snakes in our region are generally of the pit viper family: six rattlesnake species.
- If no pain or swelling is present, envenomation is unlikely. About 25% of snake bites are dry bites.
- Black Widow spider bites tend to be minimally painful initially, but over a few hours, muscular and severe abdominal pain may develop (black spider with a red hourglass on the belly).
- Brown Recluse spider bites are minimally painful to painless. Little reaction is noted initially but tissue necrosis at the site of the bite develops over the next few days (brown spider with fiddle shape on back).
- Evidence of infection includes: swelling, redness, drainage, fever, and red streaks proximal to wound.
- Consider contacting the California Poison Control Center for identification (800) 222-1222.