

⚠ RATTLESNAKE SEASON ⚠

Safety Information for Neighborhood Residents & Pet Owners

Know Your Rattlesnakes

How to Identify One

- Triangular / diamond-shaped head
- Rattle at the tip of the tail
- Elliptical (cat-like) pupils; heavy, thick body
- Blotched or banded pattern (varies by species)
- Peak activity: May through September

If you hear a buzzing or rattling sound — back away immediately.

Where They Hide

- Tall grass and unmowed easements
- Rock piles, wood piles, and debris
- Under porches, sheds, and decks
- Along fence lines and irrigation ditches
- Warm pavement and paths at dawn/dusk

Emergency Resources

- MT Poison Control (humans): 1-800-222-1222
- ASPCA Poison Control (pets): 888-426-4435
- MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks: fwp.mt.gov
- Bridger Veterinary Specialist: 406-548-4226

For more information on snakes in our area, visit <https://agr.mt.gov/docs/vertebratepests-docs/LivingwithMontanasSnakes.pdf>

Personal Safety Tips

- Wear boots and long pants in tall grass
- Walk on cleared paths when possible
- Use a flashlight after dark — snakes are active at night
- Keep children and pets close
- Never reach into brush or rock piles without looking

Around Your Home

- Seal gaps in foundations, porches & sheds
- Remove wood piles and rock piles near the house
- Keep grass mowed short around structures
- Store pet food inside — it attracts rodents (snake prey)

If Your Animal Is Bitten — Act Fast

✓ DO These Things

- Stay calm — keep your pet calm and still
- Remove your pet from the area immediately
- Note the time of the bite
- Call your vet or emergency animal hospital RIGHT AWAY
- Keep the bite site below heart level if possible (i.e. do not lay animal on side if bitten on a leg, keep in standing position)
- Carry your pet — do not let it walk

✗ Do NOT Do These

- Do NOT cut the wound or try to suck out venom
- Do NOT apply a tourniquet or ice
- Do NOT give human medications (ibuprofen, aspirin)
- Do NOT wait for symptoms — act now
- Do NOT let your pet run — exertion speeds venom spread
- Do NOT attempt to catch or kill the snake

Rattlesnake Vaccine for Dogs & Horses

A rattlesnake vaccine is available for dogs and horses that may help reduce the severity of a bite.

What Is It?

An injectable vaccine made from western diamondback venom proteins that stimulates the immune system to produce antibodies that can neutralize rattlesnake venom.

How Does It Work?

After a bite, the antibodies bind to venom components and slow their spread, reducing tissue damage. A booster is typically needed annually before snake season.

Why Consider It?

It buys critical extra time to reach a vet, reduces pain and swelling, lowers risk of serious tissue damage, and may reduce treatment costs.

⚠ IMPORTANT: The vaccine is NOT a cure. If your animal is bitten, seek emergency veterinary care immediately. The vaccine only delays the effects — it does not eliminate the need for treatment.

✓ **Consult your primary care veterinarian** to determine if the vaccine is appropriate for your dog or horse, discuss the schedule, and ask about any health considerations for your animal.

Rattlesnake Avoidance Clinic for Dogs

These clinics train dogs to recognize and avoid rattlesnakes using scent, sight, and sound conditioning — giving your dog a natural aversion response. Visit:

Montana Brittany Club: montanabc.org

Facebook: Montana Brittany Club page

Also search 'rattlesnake avoidance clinic Montana' or contact local hunting dog clubs and K-9 training facilities.