

WOOF MAG

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DEADLY IS
HEARTWORM?

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PET PSYCHIC

WHY NOT
RESCUE A SENIOR?

Snakes
AND HOW TO
PROTECT
YOUR DOG



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PROTECTING DOGS FROM SNAKE BITES

WRITTEN BY MARK PELLEY THE SNAKE HUNTER

Working as Australia's own 'Snake Hunter', last summer I witnessed more dogs be bitten and killed by snakes than at any other time in my career. I spent hours consoling many dog owners who were emotionally and financially devastated at the loss of their beloved family pet and a vet bill running into the thousands.

Owners who lost their dog always ask me only one question: "What could I have done differently?"

To try to prevent this from happening again, some practical advice that dog owners should know is:

KEEP YOUR HOUSE AND BACK YARD CLEAN

Your dog is more likely to be bitten in his own backyard than going out for a walk and as such a clean, neat and tidy yard is key to prevention.



Mark and a Tiger Snake

Do NOT rely on "snake prevention" devices to save your dog as they do not work. Instead cut grass low, remove weeds, rubbish, excessive shrubs and foliage. This reduces places for the snake to hide and minimises vermin for the snake to eat.

Do your best to fill in gaps in rocks or access areas so that a snake cannot easily access. Maintaining a clear view of the ground ensures that owners see what is happening in advance to prevent dogs "suddenly" coming across a snake.

OBEDIENCE TRAINING

A dog with excellent obedience training is more likely to avoid going near a snake or interacting with it. When out for a walk, keep your dog on a leash or otherwise ensure it stays near you. The dog is less likely to interact with a snake if it is under our direct control. Training your dog to have good recall will ensure that your dog returns to you when about to interact with a snake. I work with a dog trainer that teaches specific snake avoidance training ensuring dogs stay away from snakes even when the owner is not around.

KEEP YOURSELF SAFE

If you see a snake in your home or backyard, call a snake catcher. Do not put yourself at risk to try to save your dog. Snakes are not looking to interact with people or pets however will defend themselves if threatened or hurt. Do not let your dog examine

dead snakes as they still have fangs that could contain venom. Further, some snakes can stay extremely still even when danger is nearby (such as the death adder).

Never attempt to capture or kill a snake. It is extremely dangerous to do so and they are protected by state laws.

CONSIDER PET INSURANCE

The cost of treating a snake bite can be very high with most cases typically between \$4000 - \$8000. The saddest case I dealt with was where the owners could not afford to save the family pet because they did not have pet insurance and the dog had to be put down.

WHAT TO DO IF YOUR DOG IS BITTEN

If you suspect that your dog has been bitten by a snake, keep control of your own emotions and immediately take him/her to a vet. Call in advance and follow the vet's instructions of first aid. Australian snake venom is extremely toxic and can cause your dog significant pain, suffering and death.

Continued over the page



Death Adder above and right



An encounter with a snake can leave you devastated, so when out walking keep yourself and your dog safe.



Eastern Tiger Snake

PROTECTING DOGS FROM SNAKE BITES *Continued from page 39*

SOME OF THE COMMON SIGNS & SYMPTOMS OF A SNAKE BITE:

- Weakness or lethargy
- Shaking or twitching
- Dilated Pupils or difficulty blinking
- Vomiting
- Loss of bladder or bowel control
- Loss of function of body movements
- Rapid and shallow breathing
- Excessive drooling
- Bleeding from snake bite wound
- Paralysis, Collapse, Coma

**IF BITTEN, GET YOUR DOG TO A VET IMMEDIATELY. DO NOT DELAY!
DO NOT TRY TO CATCH, HANDLE OR KILL A SNAKE EVER.**



Dog's eyeview of Tiger Snake

Once at the vet, your dog will be assessed and likely treated with a poly antivenene. Prognosis is determined by a range of factors and your vet will be the best person to discuss this with you.

As part of the recovery process, your dog will be significantly weakened for some time so it is important to provide them with proper care in accordance with the vet's instructions.

Remember: Train your dog well. They are your companions for their entire lives. The more effort you put into teaching and training them, the more obedient your dog will be when the time counts. Keep your pets safe this summer!

by **Mark Pelley** The Snake Hunter