



Red Rock Biologics

RATTLESNAKE RISKS FOR DOGS

CONTACT

FAQ



Rattlesnake Risks for Dogs

Rattlesnakes live in a variety of habitats.

They are found in wetlands, deserts and forests, from sea level to mountain elevations. Rattlesnakes are most active in warmer seasons, from Spring to Autumn. In southern latitudes they are occasionally found year-round.

Dogs are at risk for rattlesnake bite.

Dogs can encounter a rattlesnake anytime they are in rattlesnake habitat. You and your dog may live in rattlesnake habitat. Perhaps you travel through or frequently visit places where rattlesnakes are found. Maybe rattlesnakes are around when you take your dog hiking, camping or hunting. Like people, dogs may stumble over the location of a snake by accident. Curiosity or a protective instinct can place your dog at risk. In each case, vaccination helps to protect her.

Damage caused by rattlesnake bite can be serious.

When injected into an unprotected dog, the toxic components of snake venom are very painful and can have serious consequences. Even if your dog survives the immediate effects of a rattlesnake bite, she can be permanently injured.

Treatment of rattlesnake bite is expensive.

Treatment of snakebite may include antivenom injections which can cost hundreds to thousands of dollars. Use of antivenom is associated with an increased risk of adverse effects which can complicate a dog's recovery. Other costs of snakebite treatment may include hospitalization, intravenous fluids or other medicines. Vaccination is safer than antivenom treatment. Vaccination can reduce the overall effects of snakebite, reduce or eliminate the need for antivenom, and decrease other treatment costs as well.

Protocol for prevention.

The first year your dog is vaccinated, she should receive two doses of vaccine spaced one month apart. Subsequent booster doses are recommended annually in the Spring, or about a month before you take your dog into rattlesnake habitat.

The vaccine stimulates your dog's own immunity.

This process makes vaccination safer than antivenom treatment. Protective antibodies made by your dog in response to the vaccine start neutralizing venom immediately. On average, antibody levels

in recently vaccinated dogs are comparable to treatment with three vials of antivenom. This means vaccinated dogs should experience less pain and a reduced risk of permanent injury from rattlesnake bite.

Snakebite is always an emergency.

Even after your dog is vaccinated against rattlesnake venom, she should be taken to a veterinarian for evaluation and care as soon as possible following snakebite. Even bites by non-venomous snakes can lead to serious infections and antibiotic treatment may be needed. A veterinarian can determine if your dog is sufficiently protected for the specific type of snake involved and the amount of venom injected, or whether additional medical treatment would be helpful.

There are many different poisonous snakes.

Red Rock Biologics is developing a variety of vaccines to provide the best protection against poisonous snakes for dogs in each part of the country. Ask your veterinarian which available vaccine formulation is best for your dog.

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