



News from Murdoch University

Murdoch University: What to do if you find a snake at your home

While there are probably fewer snakes in heavily built-up areas, snakes will be attracted to areas where they have a protected place to live with a good source of food. These places around your home could include under sheets of tin, logs, rocks and decking.

If you find a snake near your home, Murdoch University's Lecturer in Veterinary Pharmacology Tim Hyndman has some advice to help you handle the situation.

Don't approach the snake.

If your dog has found a snake, try to call them away – although this is not always easy. (It is far less common to know that your cat has found a snake because they won't be barking at it.) The snake is likely to be irritated by the attention it is receiving from your pet, so don't approach it. Never try to kill the snake: this is illegal and can result in a dangerous situation for you, your pet and the snake.

If the snake is inside, cordon off the area and call for help.

If you find a snake inside your house in a room that has a door to the outside, you can open the door and hope that the snake leaves on its own accord but unless the snake feels exposed and the door is an easy way out, this will rarely be effective. If this doesn't work, try closing the door to the room it was found in and then call for help. As a first port of call, you can try calling the Department for Environment and Conservation (DEC), which has a list of registered snake removal people who may be able to help you.

Walk away calmly, or stay still.

By simply walking away calmly, you will be letting the snake know that you don't mean them any harm. It is sometimes said that you should stay still when you come across a snake; this will often work as the snake will be doing its best to get away. If you find that you have accidentally cornered the snake and made it defensive, you should be the one to take the initiative and walk away from the situation.

Let your neighbours know.

If you see a snake, it is best to just leave it alone. Let your neighbours know that you have seen one in your area so they can be alert, and make sure that your neighbours know to watch their pets more closely. Wear long pants and closed shoes when you go outside, and recommend that your neighbours do the same.

Know what to do if a person or pet gets bitten.

If you or a member of your family get bitten by a snake, the first step is to get away from the source of danger. The snake will usually leave on its own accord, so you can walk away calmly and call an ambulance. Have compression bandages in your home first aid kit to bandage the entire limb that was bitten – this will slow the onset of venom in humans.

If there's a risk that your pet may have been bitten, take them to your vet immediately, even if they are not showing any symptoms. Don't use compression bandages on your pet. See our ['7 ways to keep your pets safe from snakebites this summer'](#) for more information on this.