The Poisonous Snakes of North Carolina
presented by Carolinas Poison Center

Call Carolinas Poison Center if you are bitten by a snake: 1-800-222-1222

Venomous vs. Poisonous: What’s the difference?
The short answer is that all venomous animals are poisonous.1 This is the reason people call poison control centers for help with bites and stings.

Venomous is a specific word indicating that an animal has a venom gland and a way to introduce the venom it produces (fangs).2 Poisonous is a more general word indicating that a substance (venom) can be harmful to a person’s organs or tissues.1

Venomous and poisonous are sometimes interchanged when talking about snakes with venom. While venomous is the more precise term, both terms are accurate.

How many snakes with venom live in North Carolina?
There are six snakes with venom that live in North Carolina: • copperhead • cottonmouth • pigmy rattlesnake • eastern diamondback • coral snake • rattlesnake

This poster only features the first five, however, because the coral snake is so rare in North Carolina. In fact, the Carolinas Poison Center hasn’t had a call about a coral snake bite in over 20 years.

Which venomous snake is most common in North Carolina?
The copperhead is the most common venomous snake in North Carolina. The Carolinas Poison Center receives 10 times the number of calls about copperhead bites than all other snake bites combined.

Why call Carolinas Poison Center for a snake bite?
Carolinas Poison Center is the poison control center serving all of North Carolina. Here’s why you should call us:
• Snake bites are poisonings, and treating poisonings is our job.
• Nurses, doctors, and pharmacists (specialists) handle the calls.
• Our specialists have years of experience and training managing snake bites.
• Other doctors and nurses call us to help treat their snake-bitten patients.

To order a free snake pack from Carolinas Poison Center, visit www.herpsofnc.org.

For more information about snake identification, visit www.herpsofnc.org.

For more information about snake poisonings is our job.

²  White, Julian and Richard Dart. Snake Venom Poisoning. With permission:


Call Carolinas Poison Center anytime for help with snake bites: 1-800-222-1222.
Program the number into your phone for quick and easy access.


Venomous snakes are often serious and can be fatal. Avoiding these snakes is the best prevention. If bitten, call Carolinas Poison Center immediately. Call Carolinas Poison Center anytime for help: 1-800-222-1222.