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## Beware of rattlesnakes when venturing outside the home

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Photo provided

With the warm weather on the rise, the East Bay Area has been seeing a spike in rattlesnake encounters and the East Bay Regional Park District is advising that the public take snake safety precautions when visiting Regional Parks.

Safety tips include:

1. Avoid hiking alone so you have help in case of emergency. (Per local health orders, hike only with members of your immediate household during COVID-19)
2. Scan the ground ahead of you as you walk, jog, or ride. Stay on trails and avoid walking in tall grass.
3. Look carefully around and under logs and rocks before sitting down.
4. Avoid placing your hands or feet where you cannot see clearly.
5. Keep leashed pets on designated trails and away from snakes if they see one. (All dogs should be on-leash at all times, in all parks during COVID-19)
6. Bring plenty of water for yourself and your pets as drinking fountains are temporarily closed. Many parks do not have a direct water supply.

If you see a rattlesnake, leave it alone - do not try to capture or harm it. All park wildlife is protected by law. If you see a snake on a trail, wait for it to cross and do not approach. Then move carefully and slowly away.

What to do if bitten by a snake:

1. If bitten by a rattlesnake, stay calm and send someone to call 911. Remain calm by lying down with the affected limb lower than the heart. Getting medical attention quickly is critical - do not spend time on tourniquets, "sucking," or snake bite kits. If you are by yourself, walk calmly to the nearest source of help to dial 911. Do not run.
2. If bitten by any other kind of snake, wash the wound with soap and water or an antiseptic and seek medical attention.
3. If you are not sure what kind of snake bit you, check the bite for two puncture marks (in rare cases one puncture mark) associated with intense, burning pain. This is typical of a rattlesnake bite. Other snakebites may leave multiple teeth marks without associated burning pain.

Snakes are an important resource in the natural environment. They are prime controlling agents of rodents, insects, and other reptile populations. Enjoy them from afar and leave them where they are found. It is illegal to collect, kill, or remove any plants or animals from the East Bay Regional Park District. Please help us to protect wildlife and their environment for present and future generations. Additional information is available at [ebparks.org/SnakeSafety](http://ebparks.org/SnakeSafety).

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