

Spiders & Scorpions



COLLEGE OF
PHARMACY
NEW MEXICO POISON &
DRUG INFORMATION CENTER

Spiders and scorpions are close relatives, and all species are venomous. However, black widow spiders and the Arizona bark scorpion are able to cause serious illness.

Black Widow Spiders

Black widow venom causes severe muscle spasms all over the body, especially in small children and the elderly. These spiders are a shiny black color and have large, rounded abdomens ranging from one to two inches in diameter. The females are larger than males and have a red marking on their abdomens that may or may not look like an hourglass.

Arizona Bark Scorpions

The Arizona bark scorpion is found in the southwest corner of New Mexico and is the only species that can cause serious medical illness, especially in small children and the elderly. These scorpions like dark, damp places and are able to climb every surface except glass and clear plastic. They are one to one and one-half inches in length.

Symptoms of a Arizona bark scorpion sting in children include uncontrollable crying, increased salivation, and rapid eye movements. Adults may experience pain and burning at the site of the bite and numbness and tingling distant to the site of the bite, difficulty swallowing and increased saliva or drooling, muscle twitching, respiratory problems, slurred speech, restlessness, and irritability.

Vinegaroons (Whip Scorpions)

Vinegaroons are black and nocturnal creatures. **Unlike true scorpions, they are not venomous, but their vinegar secretions can cause irritation to the skin, eyes, and mouth.** Exposures to the skin may cause pain, reddening of the skin, tingling or numbness, itching, and swelling. These symptoms can last one hour to a couple of days. Eye exposures are usually painful with possible blurred vision, and can last one hour to several days. Exposures to the mouth in children can cause irritation and ulceration.

Black Widow Spider



Prevention and First Aid Tips

Dust and vacuum around windows, corners of rooms, and under furniture regularly; wear gloves when working with wood piles, brush, and rocks; shake shoes, towels and bedding before using; wear shoes at night, especially around bodies of water; cover cribs in netting and put legs in glass jars; and get your home professionally exterminated on an annual basis; **if bitten or stung call 1-800-222-1222 immediately for treatment advice.**



Venomous & Toxic Creatures of New Mexico

<https://hsc.unm.edu/poison>

Snakes

Prevention & First Aid Tips

Snake season in New Mexico runs from April through October, depending on the weather. Venomous snakes have triangular heads, elliptical pupils, upper jaws with fangs and rounded tails. **There are two venomous snakes that inhabit New Mexico, the rattlesnake and the coral snake.**

Rattlesnakes

The most common venomous snake in New Mexico is the rattlesnake. Rattlesnake venom is very toxic. Eight species of rattlesnakes inhabit New Mexico: *Prairie, Western, Diamondback, Black-tailed, Rock, Ridgenose, Massasauga, and Mojave.*

Coral Snakes

Coral snakes can be found in the southwest corner of New Mexico. Coral snake venom is also highly toxic. However, those in New Mexico are often too small to bite humans. Coral snakes can easily be confused with non-venomous milk snakes because of their similar banding patterns.

Coral Snake



Snakebite Prevention and First Aid

- **Do not try to capture or handle a poisonous snake.**
- Walk in cleared areas where it is easy to see where you step or reach with your hands.
- Wear gloves when using hands to move rocks or brush. Snakes seek shade during intense summer heat.
- Wear protective clothing, such as long pants and boots.
- Never put your hands or feet into places where you cannot see.
- Patch holes in your home that are more than one-quarter of an inch wide. Be careful when working in a crawl space.
- Use a walking stick to rustle brush to alert snakes of your presence.
- **Always carry your cell phone with you. Save 1-800-222-1222 in your contacts.**

If bitten...

- Remain calm.
- Put a safe distance between you and the snake.
- **Get to a hospital immediately.** Antivenin is the only accepted treatment.
- Keep the bite area immobilized and level with your heart.
- Do not put ice on the bite or try to suck the venom out with your mouth.
- **Call the New Mexico Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222 for more first aid advice.**

Rattle Snake



Poisoned?

Try the
webPOISONCONTROL[®]
tool to get expert help

by scanning this QR Code
or going online to:

<https://www.webpoisoncontrol.org>