

## CHAPTER 6

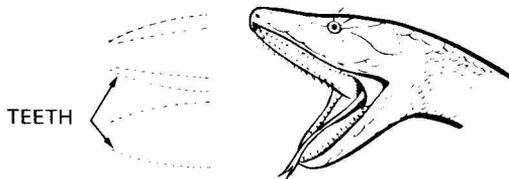
# FIRST AID FOR BITES AND STINGS

### INTRODUCTION

Snakebites, insect bites, or stings can cause intense pain and/or swelling. If not treated promptly and correctly, they can cause serious illness or death. The severity of a snakebite depends upon: whether the snake is poisonous or nonpoisonous, the type of snake, the location of the bite, and the amount of venom injected. Bites from humans and other animals, such as dogs, cats, bats, raccoons, and rats can cause severe bruises and infection, and tears or lacerations of tissue. Awareness of the potential sources of injuries can reduce or prevent them from occurring. Knowledge and prompt application of first aid measures can lessen the severity of injuries from bites and stings and keep the soldier from becoming a serious casualty.

#### 6-1. Types of Snakes

*a. Nonpoisonous Snakes.* There are approximately 130 different varieties of nonpoisonous snakes in the United States. They have oval-shaped heads and round eyes. Unlike poisonous snakes, discussed below, nonpoisonous snakes do not have fangs with which to inject venom. See Figure 6-1 for characteristics of a nonpoisonous snake.



*Figure 6-1. Characteristics of nonpoisonous snake.*

*b. Poisonous Snakes.* Poisonous snakes are found throughout the world, primarily in tropical to moderate climates. Within the United States, there are four kinds: rattlesnakes, copperheads, water moccasins (cottonmouth), and coral snakes. Poisonous snakes in other parts of the world include sea snakes, the fer-de-lance, the bushmaster, and the tropical rattlesnake in tropical Central America; the Malayan pit viper in the tropical Far East; the cobra in Africa and Asia; the mamba (or black mamba) in Central and Southern Africa; and the krait in India and Southeast Asia. See Figure 6-2 for characteristics of a poisonous pit viper.

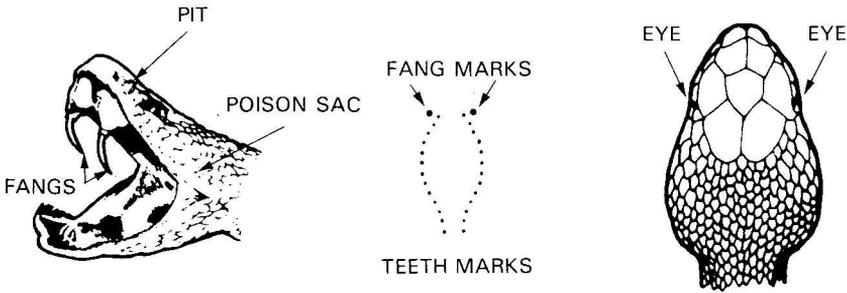
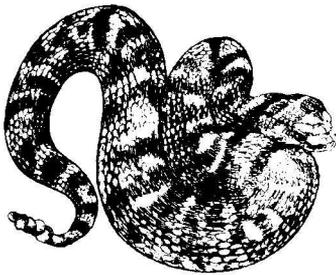
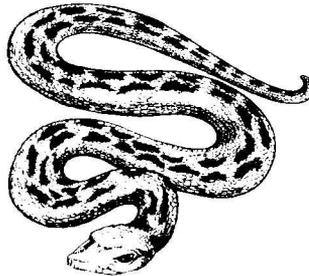


Figure 6-2. Characteristics of poisonous pit viper.

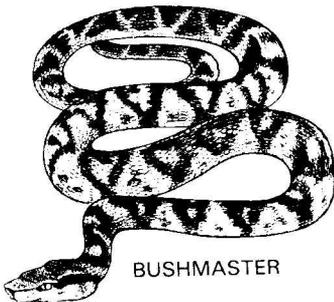
c. Pit Vipers (Poisonous). See Figure 6-3 for illustrations.



TROPICAL RATTLESNAKE



MALAYAN PIT VIPER



BUSHMASTER



FER-DE-LANCE

Figure 6-3. Poisonous snakes.

