



# VENOM EXTRACTOR KITS: More Harm, No Good

## Venom Extractors Do Not Work and May Cause Harm

For at least 60 years we've had evidence that venom extractors don't work and may in some cases do greater harm to a snakebite victim, yet they remain commercially available, and consumers continue to purchase them. Your store is selling a product that may put your customers at risk.

BTG Specialty Pharmaceuticals, the rescue medicine company, asks that you **critically compare the marketing claims made by venom extractors regarding snakebites to the medical evidence and consider whether you should continue to sell them.**

We examined nearly three dozen clinical research studies, editorials, guidelines and literature reviews on venom extractors and interviewed 15 practitioners who are experts in the treatment of snakebites. The experts all agree, the evidence demonstrates that:

- **Snake venom extractor kits have no beneficial effect on snakebites.** One study showed the devices could cause serious damage to the area around the wound without extracting venom or protecting the victim's muscle tissue in any way.
- **Possessing a venom extractor kit provides a false sense of security.** If bitten by a snake, a venom extractor is no more helpful than a lucky charm. The best response to a snakebite is to get to a hospital as quickly and safely as possible.
- Pausing to use an extractor kit could deprive the snakebite victim of precious time between the bite and appropriate treatment in a hospital emergency department. **Applying a venom extractor could result in permanent tissue damage or disability**, if it removes a bite victim's sense of urgency, delays a trip to the hospital, or fools them into thinking they don't need to seek medical help at all.

## The Medical Evidence

In one peer-reviewed study, "Suction for Venomous Snakebite: A Study of 'Mock Venom' Extraction in a Human Model," in *Annals of Emergency Medicine*, the authors found that the venom extractor removed bloody fluid from simulated snakebite wounds but removed virtually no mock venom, which suggests that **suction is unlikely to be an effective treatment for reducing the total body venom burden after a venomous snakebite.**

And in "Effects of a Negative Pressure Venom Extraction Device (Extractor) on Local Tissue Injury after Artificial Rattlesnake Envenomation in a Porcine Model," in *Wilderness and Environmental Medicine*, the authors concluded that venom extraction devices demonstrated no benefit **and may have caused harm** in a pig model of Western Diamondback envenomation.

Based on these and other studies, the American Heart Association, American Red Cross, the Boy Scouts of America, and others specifically advise against using suction on a snakebite. The American Red Cross says, "**Suction has no clinical benefit and it may aggravate the injury.**"

To read the full report, visit:

**[www.btgsp.com/venom-extractor](http://www.btgsp.com/venom-extractor)**

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