Common Spiders of Southern Africa

Southern Africa has well over 2,200 known species of spiders with very few that are of medical importance. Most 'spider bites' are not spider bites but wounds caused by infections and other invertebrates. There has never been a fatal spider bite in Southern Africa.

**Note**
For suspected spider bites, keep the wound clean and consult a medical doctor.

**Emergency Protocol**
Bites from Medically Significant Spiders Must Be Treated As a Medical Emergency.

1. Transport the victim to hospital without delay.
2. Immobilize the affected limb to slow the spread of venom.
3. If the victim stops breathing, apply artificial respiration or use a Bag Valve Mask.
4. Call the Poison Information Centre helpline for further advice: 0861 555 777.

**Do Not**
- ...apply a tourniquet.
- ...cut and suck the wound.
- ...use ice or very hot water.
- ...give the victim alcohol.
- ...apply electric shock.
- ...inject antivenom randomly.

Antivenom (if required) must be administered by a doctor in a hospital environment.

Johan Marais is the author of various books on reptiles including the best-seller A Complete Guide to Snakes of Southern Africa. He is a popular public speaker and offers a variety of courses including Snake Awareness, Spider Awareness and Venomous Snake Handling. Johan is accredited by the International Society of Zoological Sciences (ISZS) and is a Field Guides Association of Southern Africa (FGASA) and Travel Doctor-approved service provider.

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