Southern Africa has one hundred and seventy three different types of snakes. Seventy two are not venomous, while twenty nine can inflict rather painful bites. Twenty species are considered potentially deadly.

**DANGEROUS SNAKES OF SOUTHERN AFRICA**

Black Mamba (**Dendroaspis polylepis**)

Green Mamba (**Dendroaspis angusticeps**)

Southern Twig Snake (**Thelotornis capensis capensis**)

Cape Cobra (**Naja nivea**)

Bibron’s Stiletto Snake (**Atractaspis bibronii**)

Common Boomslang - male (**Dispholidus typus viridis**)

Common Boomslang - female (**Dispholidus typus viridis**)

Bibron’s Stiletto Snake (**Atractaspis bibronii**)

Black-necked Spitting Cobra (**Naja nigricollis**)

Black Spitting Cobra (**Naja nigricincta woodi**)

Snouted Cobra (**Naja annulifera**)

Mozambique Spitting Cobra (**Naja mossambica**)

Forest Cobra (**Naja subfulva**)

Zebra Cobra (**Naja nigricincta nigricincta**)

Rinkhals (**Hemachatus haemachatus**)

Puff Adder (**Bitis arietans arietans**)

Gaboon Adder (**Bitis gabonica**)

Very Dangerous

Painful bite, but does not require antivenom

Very Dangerous

Has caused human fatalities

EMERGENCY PROTOCOL

**IN THE EVENT OF A SNAKE BITE**

1. Keep the victim calm, immobilized and transport the victim to the closest hospital **without delay**.
2. If the victim stops breathing, resort to artificial respiration or make use of a Bag Valve Mask.
3. Call the Poison Information Centre help-line 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.
- Inject antivenom randomly.

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

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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, Scorpion 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. His courses are also accredited by the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA).

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