

## Protect your Pets from Rattlesnakes

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They're sometimes loud, but they can also be very sneaky.

"My friend's dog got bit about 2 years ago." Josh Bowyer knows how dangerous rattlesnake season can be. He doesn't want his dog, Cocoa, to fall victim.

"She's pretty shy to get close to anything that isn't her family," Bowyer told KOLD.

But with the threat out in the desert, Josh and his family aren't taking any chances. "We try to keep outside with her every time we're out with her, we don't really let her out anymore."

Staying with your dog is exactly what Dr. Meegan Stapleton, a vet with Veterinary Specialty Center of Tucson, recommends.

"They're coming out almost a little earlier it seems because it's still getting cool at night," Stapleton said.

Stapleton says they're already seeing the effects snakes can have on pets. "I actually just saw the first one (snake bite attack) this past Tuesday, and then so far this week we've seen four more."

If you're worried your dog was attacked by a snake, Dr. Stapleton says look for the signs.

"You can see two puncture marks, a lot of the times on the face or on their feet. You may also see swelling or bleeding from those puncture marks, and they are also very painful to the touch."

If the signs match, seek immediate help. Almost all vets will be equipped with Antivenin this time of year. "So we keep several boxes out and as I said, usually we have anywhere from 50 - 75 vials on stock," Stapleton told KOLD.

A snake bite can result in tissue damage and even death if you don't react fast.

Dr. Stapleton said, "I'd say 80 to 90% of the dogs treated in our hospital do well and leave."

To help keep your four-legged friend out of harms way, the Humane Society of Southern Arizona offers snake aversion classes.

"So if they see one they don't go up to it, they know to back away or even if they smell one they've been trained to leave it alone," Stapleton explained.

And if your dog won't leave the snakes alone, Dr. Stapleton says it's your job to help them. "Don't walk your dog at dawn and dusk when there's going to be the snakes out there, the most popular time."

If you would like more information on the Humane Society snake aversion classes, you can call 321-3704 or click on this link, [www.hssaz.org](http://www.hssaz.org) .