

THE RANGE

The Tucson Weekly's Old Pueblog

TUCSON WEEKLY

Local Dogs Taking on Snakes – and Losing

By Jimmy Boegle

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The Veterinary Specialty Center of Tucson (VSCT), the largest 24/7 emergency and multi-specialty veterinary facility in southern Arizona, hospitalized six dogs in a 12 hour period this week for snakebite injuries. With a national shortage of antivenin, pet owners need to be especially careful. Fortunately, VSCT has enough antivenin to treat Tucson's pets through the summer rattlesnake season.

What to Watch For:

- Puncture marks oozing blood
- Rapid swelling and pain at the site of the bite
- Rapid breathing, weakness, collapse
- Pale gums, drooling

What to Do:

- If your pet has been bitten, **seek veterinary care immediately***
- Keep your pet calm. Limit activity.
- **DO NOT** apply a tourniquet or ice, which can cut off circulation and worsen the injury.
- **DO NOT** attempt to suck the venom out of the bite: you could be injured or cause serious infection.
- **DO NOT** give your pet any human medications.

Veterinary Care

Antivenin is usually recommended to neutralize the venom. Your pet may also be treated for shock, pain, infection, and could require hospitalization if the bite is severe. (Rattlesnake venom contains anti-coagulants and enzymes that damage blood vessels and tissue, and can cause the blood pressure to drop dangerously low.)



***24 Hour Pet Emergency Care: 520-795-9955**

The Veterinary Specialty Center of Tucson is located at 4909 N La Canada Drive (River and La Canada) with veterinarians and a full emergency staff on duty 24/7.