

Adder Bites

The adder is the only venomous snake in the UK and can be identified by an X or V shape on the back of the head and dark zigzag pattern on its back. Colour can vary.

They are not aggressive - but may bite if disturbed by a curious dog!

Adders are a protected species.

Bites are more common in the spring and summer when the snake is active due to warmer weather (they hibernate over winter).

The bitten area will swell up and the dog may suffer lethargy, vomiting, diarrhoea, fever, increased heart rate and low blood pressure. If the bite is severe the dog could fit and even fall into a coma. An adder bite can be fatal but this is rare.

Call the vet immediately. If the dog is bitten on the face, head or neck remove the collar to prevent choking. Stop the dog from moving about, as this will spread the venom around the body. Where possible, either carry the dog to the vehicle or drive the vehicle to the dog. Otherwise, walk slowly and rest if necessary. Do not tamper with the wound (e.g. ice pack, tourniquet, sucking the venom out), as this could spread the venom.

Treatment may include anti-venom, anti-inflammatory drugs, IV fluids and antibiotics.



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