1. Preventing a Snake Bite
• Do not tease or try to capture or handle a venomous snake. Snakes will not usually bother humans unless they feel threatened.
• Walk in cleared areas where it is easy to see where you step or reach with your hands.
• Wear protective clothing, such as long pants and boots. Some snakes, such as the rattlesnake, can sense the heat of bare skin.
• Wear gloves when using hands to move rocks or brush. Snakes seek shade during intense summer heat.
• Never put your hands or feet into places where you cannot see.
• Patch holes in your home that are more than a ¼ inch wide. Be careful when working in a crawl space.

2. Symptoms of a Poisonous Snake Bite
• Visible fang mark(s). There may be only one.
• Burning, pain, swelling and bruising at the site of the bite. There may also be bleeding and/or discharge from the wound.
• Other symptoms include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and sweating.

3. Caring for a Poisonous Snake Bite
• Remain calm and put a safe distance between you and the snake.
• Call 911 for transport to a medical facility. Antivenom is the only definitive treatment.
• While awaiting transport:
  • Call the New Mexico Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222 for guidance.
  • Remove jewelry or other items that restrict swelling from the bite area.
  • Keep the bite area loosely splinted, immobilized and level with your heart.
• DO NOT
  • put ice on the bite
  • try to suck out the venom
  • apply heat or electric shock
  • use a tourniquet or any other local treatments.
  These techniques do not help and may cause more tissue damage.

Call the New Mexico Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222 for additional first aid advice.
sons are spring, summer, and all in New Mexico. All snakes are predators, animals at kill and eat other animals. Although many of us fear snakes, they are helpful to both humans and the ecosystem because they eat disease-carrying rodents and keep different species in balance.

Venomous snakes produce venom, a special kind of saliva that is toxic to humans and can lead to death if left untreated. The main purpose of venom is to kill and digest prey. However, a snake will use its venom as a weapon to defend itself against larger animals.

Rattlesnakes
Rattlesnakes are the most common venomous snake in the southwest. Many different types of rattlesnakes live in New Mexico, including prairie, western diamondback, black-tailed, rock, ridgenose, massasauga and Mojave. Rattlesnakes belong to the pit viper family. Pit vipers, or crotalidæ, have heat-sensing pits that are located below their nostrils. These organs allow pit vipers to sense the body heat of other animals. The rattles located at the end of their tails make rattlesnakes different from all other snakes. Be aware that rattlesnakes do not always warn their victims or “rattle” before they strike, and the rattle button on very young rattlesnakes does not sound. In New Mexico, about 75 to 100 people are bitten by rattlesnakes every year.

Coral Snakes
Coral snakes can be found in the southwest corner of the state; however the New Mexico Poison Center rarely receives calls about coral snake bites. Although coral snakes are usually too small to bite humans, please be aware that their venom is highly toxic.

Learning about both harmless and dangerous snakes is important to a peaceful existence between people and these reptiles. The following table points out some differences between venomous and non-venomous snakes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Venomous vs. Non-Venomous Snakes</th>
<th>Physical Features</th>
<th>Native Species</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Venomous</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rounded heads</td>
<td>Gopher snake</td>
<td>Garter snakes (7 species)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rounded pupils</td>
<td>Gopher snake</td>
<td>Hog nose snake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharp teeth but no fangs</td>
<td>Western coach whip snake</td>
<td>Desert king snake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Venomous</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triangle-shaped heads</td>
<td>Rattlesnake; prairie; western diamondback, black-tailed, rock, ridgenose, massasauga and Mojave</td>
<td>New Mexico milk snake</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Coral snake vs. New Mexico Milk Snake
Coral snakes (venomous) are often confused with New Mexico milk snakes (non-venomous) because they have similar banding patterns. Coral snakes have a yellow band whereas New Mexico milk snakes do not. In North America, the easiest way to identify coral snakes is to remember this rhyme: “Red touches yellow will kill a fellow (coral snake). Red touches black, venom lack (New Mexico milk snake).” However, if it slithers on the ground, it is best if you leave it alone!