

Snake Poll Results – Best Way to Remove Venomous Snake During Bite?

I've had this snake bite poll running for a while now – and it seems like we've had good participation... The question was about what is the best way to go about removing a venomous snake from your body if it's biting down.

The question exactly was, "What is proper way to remove a deadly snake (cobra, krait, coral snake, taipan, etc.) from your finger if it won't let go"

- Squeeze behind jaw to open the jaw up (70%, 127 Votes)
- Rip it off as fast as possible (10%, 19 Votes)
- Pry the mouth open with something (8%, 14 Votes)
- Run it underwater until it lets go (7%, 13 Votes)
- Blow on it's face hard (5%, 9 Votes)

I wanted to comment on the answers – not as an expert – AT ALL – but, just from what I've read and learned over the years about what to do in the case of a snake bite. I think it's safe to say that if you are in such a situation – where a deadly snake is biting down on you – and won't let go... you're going to go through some serious recovery efforts in the hospital for the next couple weeks – and you might even die as a result. There is no real good answer. Not sure if there is a "correct" answer either – because I have asked 3 notable herpetologists in the field – and a couple guys that are great resources for snakes... and only 1 of them answered the question by email. I know what I would do – but, I'll save it to the end.

1. Squeeze behind the jaw to open up the mouth...

Venomous snakes have venom sacs behind the eyes on top of the

head – very close to where you will be squeezing. If you squeeze wrong, or if the snake twists while you squeeze, you might end up directly squeezing a venom sac and milking the venom right into your hand or wherever the snake is biting.

2. Rip is off as fast as possible...

I wish I had some input from snake experts on this one. Regardless whether I rip the fangs out of the snakes mouth – and embed them in my hand – this would be my first reaction I think. Will more venom be injected as a result – or, would more be injected just doing nothing and letting the snake bite down? Tough call – right?

3. Pry the mouth open with something...

This sounds reasonable, until you realize that the chance to get bitten again becomes much higher. How close will you get to the mouth with your free hand and a screwdriver? What if you slip and it nails you again?

4. Run the snake underwater until it lets go...

Some snakes hold on in spite of that. Then what do you do? You've just wasted perhaps 10 more seconds and let the snake bite down for that long – transferring more venom.

5. Blow on it's face hard...

This might sound funny – but, this is what the guys in Thailand do at the snake shows – if a cobra bites them during the show. They insist it works well. Would it work every time? No idea. They feel good about using this method. I might try it quickly but immediately move to something else if it didn't work. I think it would cause aggravation to the snake and maybe it would chew you more if you did it. Yes? No idea.

Joe Slowinski – the famous herpetologist that died in Myanmar from a bite by a many banded krait, according to “The Snake Charmer” book about him, once talked with his friend about

whether or not they would chop off a finger that was bitten by a deadly snake. I think they were even talking about a krait when they had the conversation. So the book says. Joe didn't do that when bitten by the juvenile krait on that Myanmar expedition – and died from it hours later with no good medical care.

What would I do?

Knowing that if I use one of the above except #2 – and it doesn't work – I've just let the snake inject even more deadly venom into my body...

I would use a variation of #2. I would find a cloth, rice bag, or rip off my shirt immediately and, bundling it up – grab the front of the mouth of the snake and lift up on the upper jaw – very fast, very hard – ripping it off my body.

I'm sure I couldn't do something other than an immediate and violent reaction if faced with the snake latched onto me.

Some guys on YouTube say they use Listerine to get snakes off them when they bite down and won't release. They keep bottles of the stuff around their business for just such an occasion. They show it working with a snake – just a drop.

If it was a deadly snake – I wonder – would a drop do ya? Or, would you start pouring the bottle over it's head?

Would the Listerine cause any complications with a venomous bite, or, just clean it out?

I've heard that it's best to not touch the bite site at ALL.

So many rumors and opinions about these things.

What would you do? – Leave in comments.

Cheers,

Vern