

ACMT Recommends Steps to Plan for and Prevent Venomous Animal Exposures

The American College of Medical Toxicology has released a position statement that provides recommendations to institutions that house venomous animals for prevention and planning for human envenomations.

Phoenix, Arizona ([PRWEB](#)) November 27, 2012 -- All institutions that are involved in the storage, handling or transportation of venomous animals should have an action plan in place for handling bites, stings, or other venomous exposures to humans. The American College of Medical [Toxicology](#)(ACMT) has published a position [statement](#) providing recommendations for prevention of human envenomation exposures and for obtaining rapid treatment should an exposure occur.

Most physicians in the United States are unfamiliar with the management of [envenomations](#) by snakes, scorpions, and other venomous creatures, especially if the species responsible are non-native, or 'exotic.' Antivenoms for the treatment of envenomations by exotic venomous animals are not routinely stored in hospital pharmacies, yet bites by non-native venomous snakes are reported to poison control centers each year. As a result, timely treatment of these patients is often delayed as health care providers search nationally for a specific antivenom that, when located, must be transported to the victim. This delay may result in a worse outcome for the patient. Advance planning for envenomations would facilitate rapid treatment and be expected to improve patient outcomes.

Institutions that house venomous animals must assure that the likelihood of human exposure is minimized and should make sure that there is a written response plan for an envenomation. Preparation includes obtaining the appropriate antivenom for the species being housed and handled. Antivenom for non-native species may be particularly difficult to acquire and if manufactured abroad may require special clearances for use. Protocols should be in place for storage of antivenom at the institution or at the facility that will receive patients. Policies and procedures for providing first aid and ongoing management of victims should be developed in consultation with medical toxicologists, who have expertise in the management of envenomations and [poisonings](#). Written agreements and guidelines, as appropriate, with consulting medical toxicologists, regional poison centers, emergency medical transport agencies, and receiving healthcare facilities should be developed so that first aid, transport, and management may be rapidly implemented.

The American College of Medical Toxicology (ACMT) is a professional, nonprofit association of physicians with recognized expertise in medical toxicology. The College is dedicated to advancing the science and practice of medical toxicology.