

NEW MEXICO POISON HELP HOTLINE

1-800-222-1222

VENOMOUS CREATURES IN NEW MEXICO

SNAKES

Snake seasons are spring and summer in New Mexico, when snakes emerge from their winter dens to hunt for food and water. Venomous snakes have triangular heads, elliptical pupils, upper jaws with fangs and rounded tails. There are two venomous snakes that inhabit New Mexico: the rattlesnake and the coral snake.

RATTLESNAKE - The most common venomous snake in New Mexico is the rattlesnake. Several species of rattlesnakes inhabit New Mexico. Adult rattlesnakes are usually 2.5 to 4.5 feet long and have a rattle button that sounds if they feel threatened. Rattlesnake venom is very toxic and can be deadly.

CORAL SNAKE - Coral snakes can be found in the southwest corner of New Mexico. Although the coral snakes in New Mexico are often too small to bite humans, please know that their venom is highly toxic.

Coral snakes are often confused with the New Mexico milk snake (which does not have toxic venom) because of similar banding patterns. This catchy rhyme can help one distinguish the coral snake from its less dangerous counterpart, the New Mexico milk snake: **"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 to leave it alone.

Prairie Rattlesnake



Milk Snake



Coral Snake



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SPIDERS

The venom of two spiders in New Mexico can cause serious illness: the black widow and the brown spider.

BLACK WIDOW - Black Widow spiders have a shiny black color and large, rounded abdomens. Females are larger than males, ranging from one to two inches in diameter. The female also differs from the male in that she has a red marking on her abdomen that may or may not look like an hourglass; however it is not recommended that one handles the spider to try to identify the hourglass shape.

The bite is most painful during 8 to 12 hours after being bitten. Black Widow venom causes severe muscle spasms all over the body and can be deadly, especially in small children.

BROWN SPIDER - In New Mexico, there are three species of brown spiders: the blanda, desert and Apache. All three species are similar looking spanning about an inch in length including the legs and light to dark brown in color. As close relatives to the brown recluse, the brown spiders may or may not have the "violin" marking present on their bodies. All three species live outdoors under logs, rocks, dead cacti, in burrows, etc. Their venom is very potent and can be deadly.

Black Widow Spider



Apache Brown Spider



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SCORPIONS

Arizona Bark Scorpion

Scorpions are venomous relatives of spiders. They have 4 sets of legs and two pinchers in the front of their long bodies. They sting their victims with the tips of their tails.

Although all scorpions produce venom, the Arizona bark scorpion is the only species that can cause serious medical illness and even death. The bark scorpion can be found in the southwest corner of New Mexico. If you live in an area that the Arizona bark scorpion inhabits, you are likely to find them in your home.

The Arizona Bark scorpion is one to one and one-half inches in length. This scorpion likes dark and damp places, so be extra careful around water at night if you are in an inhabited area. The Arizona bark scorpion can climb virtually any surface except glass and clean plastic.

Within two to three hours of being stung, adults may experience the following: pain and burning at the site of the bite; numbness and tingling distant to the site of the bite; difficulty swallowing and an increase in saliva or drooling; muscle twitching; respiratory problems; slurred speech; and restlessness and irritability.

Arizona Bark Scorpion

