RATTLESNAKES IN PRAIRIE DOG COLONIES
Bullsnake

Hognose

Prairie rattlesnake

juvenile Racer
The Rattlesnake: A New World pit viper
(Not just another pretty face)
- Tapered
- Missing button only
- Wear signs
- Age?
SNAKE POSTURES

NORMAL RESTING

ELEVATED DEFENSE

CAUTIOUS DEFENSE

BASKING

HEAD HIDING DEFENSE
LIFE CYCLE

• Emergence from hibernation March through May. Prairie dog pups emerge just after most snakes leave colonies.

• All snakes begin foraging for food. Females begin to ovulate.

• Females bred in previous fall will become fertilized while ovulating and stop eating after a time until after birthing.

• Males and non-fertilized females will continue to forage.

• In July males search for females for breeding and lose interest in feeding; non-pregnant females continue feeding. Sperm is stored over winter for next spring.

• Birthing occurs mainly Aug through Sept.

• Gradual return to dens beginning late Sept.

• Hibernation more or less official by early November.
NEVER LEAVE YOUR HAT ON THE GROUND!
AVOIDING A TOOTHY CONFRONTATION

- Stop in your tracks and freeze
- Allow snake to continue on its way
- Back up slowly in the direction you came from
- Stay out of the magical 3 foot radius circle

- Snake capture tongs vs. snake hooks
SNAKE BITE TREATMENT DOS AND PLEASE DON’TS

• Don’t try the “slash-and-suck-the-venom-out” method
• Don’t use dry ice
• Don’t hook yourself up to your car battery
• Don’t drink alcohol
• Don’t administer any drugs, including prescriptions, unless it is for treating breathing difficulties
• Don’t run or walk unless necessary
SNAKE BITE TREATMENT DOS AND PLEASE DON’TS

• Don’t try the “slash-and-suck-the-venom-out” method.
• Don’t use dry ice.
• Don’t hook yourself up to your car battery.
• Don’t drink heavily or eat food.
• Don’t administer any drugs, including prescriptions, unless it is for treating difficulty in breathing.
• Don’t run or walk unless necessary.
• Don’t try to kill the snake.
• Don’t use tourniquets, or the Sawyer Extraction Kit.
• DO call 911.
• DO remain calm as possible.
• DO nothing but get to a hospital.
• DO remove jewelry, watches, etc.
• DO reassure the victim.
• Car keys and a cell phone are important first aid measures.
DON'T LET THIS HAPPEN TO YOU!