What to do when bitten?

1. Stay calm. Make sure it is really a habu
Even if you cannot distinguish between different types of snakes, a habu bite will usually leave 2 marks (sometimes 1, 3, or 4). It will swell up within 5 minutes and will be extremely painful.

2. As soon as you find out it is a habu, call for help and be taken to a hospital.
Running will make the venom spread faster in your body. Walk slowly or be driven to a hospital.

3. If it is a long way to the hospital, tie the affected area loosely enough to be able to fit one finger.
Use cloth with some width, like a bandage or necktie, to tie an area closer to the heart than the bite. Tie just tight enough to slow the flow of blood. Loosen once every 15 minutes. Never use a thin thread to wrap the affected area tightly. Your blood will stop flowing and will make the situation worse.

* Bring someone with you when working in an area where the nearest hospital is far away, such as in mountainous locations. In order to be safe, check whether your cellphone has reception.
* Do not take painkillers or alcohol to ease the pain.

For more information about habu, please contact us.

- Okinawa Prefecture Department of Public Health and Medical care, and Hygienic and Pharmaceutical Affairs Division
  TEL. 098-866-2055

- Okinawa Prefecture Institute of Health and Environment
  TEL. 098-987-8223

Beware of Habu?

There are 24 types of snakes in Okinawa Prefecture - 8 of which are venomous. The only 4 snakes that are a serious threat to humans are Habu, Hime Habu, Sakishima Habu, and Taiwan Habu.

Habu color and patterns differ depending on the individual, region, and state of molting.
Habu Ecology

Habu Activity
Habus are nocturnal. They hide in holes during the day and will become active once the sun begins to set.

Where They Live
Habus generally live in the woods or grasslands, but they can be found in small parks in the city. If there is a good hiding spot and food (i.e. mice), it is wise to assume that there is a habu nearby.

Habu Activity
Habus will make an ‘S’ shape with their body before attacking. Then, they lunge and strike. Their range of attack is about two-thirds of their entire body length. Keep out of that range to stay protected.

Be Careful when You are in the Mountains
Habus are great climbers and swimmers. Be careful when you climb trees, too.

Taiwan Habu
Resemble Sakishima Habu (Invasive Species), 80~130cm

Hime Habu
Black spots on gray or brown body, 40~80cm

Pryer’s Keelback Snake
Black body with white spots. 80~110cm

Venomous but Not very harmful

Hyacin Coral Snake
Orange and black vertical stripes with white horizontal stripes. They are docile and rarely bite. 40~55cm

Characteristics of Snakes
Found on Mainland Okinawa

Harmful Venomous Snakes

Habu
Black ring-like pattern on yellow or white body. 130~240cm

Sakishima Habu
Black spots on brown body. 80~120cm

Ryukyu Odd-Tooth Snake
Red and black stripes. 130~180cm

Beauty Rat Snake
A large snake brought in from Taiwan. Found in central Okinawan mainland. 180~270cm

Amami Takachiho Snake
Brown back and yellow underside. 40~60cm

Non-Venomous Snakes

Ryukyu Green Snake
Green back and yellow underside. 70~90cm

Brahminy Blind Snake
Its entire body is a glossy gray. They live underground and look just like worms. 10~20cm

★Length in description is average to maximum length.