Snakebite Diagnostic Algorithms

DETERMINING THE MOST LIKELY SNAKE BASED ON CLINICAL FINDINGS

START HERE → **LOCAL EFFECTS OF BITE**

Examine the bite site

Minimal local effects, no significant redness, swelling, bruising

Obvious redness, swelling, ± bruising

Moderate to severe local pain

Minimal or no local pain

Marked swelling after 3+ hours

Only mild swelling after 3+ hours

- ?death adder

- brown snake
- ?taipan

- mulga snake
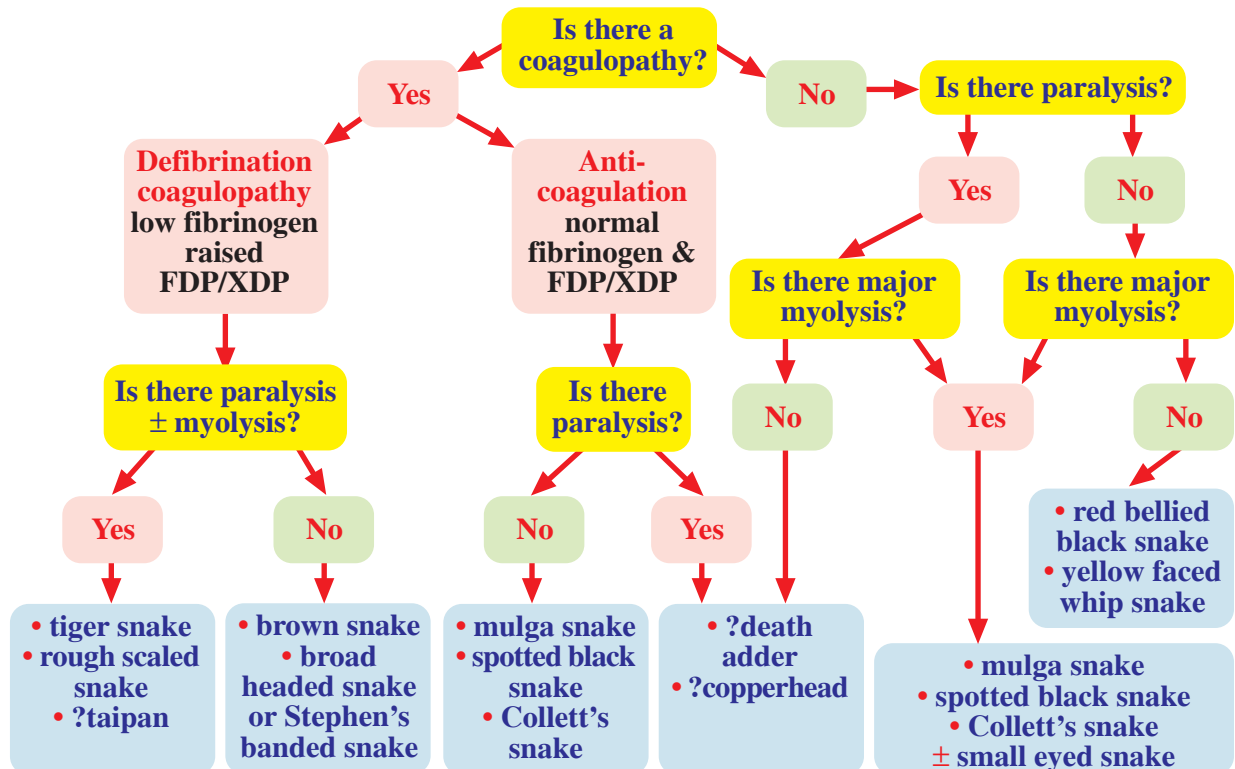- red bellied black snake
- yellow faced whip snake

- tiger snake
- rough scaled snake
- ?taipan

PLEASE NOTE:
This chart cannot cover all possible situations and assumes an understanding of the symptoms and signs of local, general and specific envenoming by Australian snakes. If in doubt, seek advice from the **Poisons Information Centre (131126)** and from your local **Critical Care Referral Network**

Combine this information with the result of the systemic effects key (below) to give a best guess for the type of snake most likely to have caused the bite. Accuracy can be improved by matching this with known snake fauna for the region where the bite occured.

SYSTEMIC EFFECTS OF BITE

Is there a coagulopathy?

Yes → / **No** → **Is there paralysis?**

Defibrination coagulopathy low fibrinogen raised FDP/XDP

Anti-coagulation normal fibrinogen & FDP/XDP

Yes / **No**

Is there paralysis ± myolysis?

Is there paralysis?

Is there major myolysis?

Is there major myolysis?

Yes / **No**

No / **Yes**

No / **Yes**

Yes / **No**

- tiger snake
- rough scaled snake
- ?taipan

- brown snake
- broad headed snake or Stephen's banded snake

- mulga snake
- spotted black snake
- Collett's snake

- ?death adder
- ?copperhead

- red bellied black snake
- yellow faced whip snake

- mulga snake
- spotted black snake
- Collett's snake ± small eyed snake

Diagnostic algorithm developed by Professor Julian White