



EASTERN MASSASAUGA RATTLESNAKE

(MICHIGAN RATTLER)



The Eastern Massasauga rattlesnake is the only poisonous snake native to Michigan and can be found throughout the entire lower peninsula and some islands in and around the Great Lakes.

The Eastern Massasauga is reclusive and docile. It is a small-to-medium-sized, thick-bodied rattlesnake that is gray, light brown, or tan with dark brown, bow tie-shaped blotches. From spring through fall, they can be found in prairie marshes, bogs, and grasslands. They prefer damp habitats, but can also be seen warming up on rocks in wooded areas. They are not aggressive, but will bite if they feel threatened.

Other non-venomous snakes found in Michigan, like the Eastern Hognose Snake and the Rat Snake, look similar to the Eastern Massasauga rattlesnake. But the Massasauga can be distinguished by typical rattlesnake features such as their triangular head, elliptical pupils, and distinct rattle.



- **DO NOT** blindly reach into hidden areas in the yard or while hiking on trails and wooded areas or fields.
- **NEVER** attempt to touch or pick up a snake found outdoors.

- **ALWAYS** wear leg and foot coverings when walking through wooded areas, trails, and tall grass.
- Wearing full coverage shoes and long pants reduces the risk of skin puncture from snake bites, but it does not eliminate the risk of envenomation.



- Call **911 IMMEDIATELY** if anyone has been bitten by an Eastern Massasauga rattlesnake or any unknown snake.
- All snake bites require medical care. Anyone bitten by a snake must be treated at their closest hospital emergency room.
- Our specialists and clinical toxicology team are always available to advise health care professionals who are treating victims of envenomation and other exposures.

FIRST AID FOR SNAKE BITES

If immediate emergency room care is delayed, first aid measures should be taken.

DO

- Stay calm
- Remove rings/jewelry from the bite area
- Wash the bite with soap & water
- Cover the bite with a clean, dry dressing
- Lay or sit in a neutral position
- Immobilize the affected limb & elevate above the heart
- Mark the edge of tenderness & swelling & mark the time with each skin change
- If possible, take a picture of the snake from a safe distance

DO NOT

- Apply a tourniquet
- Cut the skin or attempt to suck the venom out
- Burn the bite
- Apply ice or immerse in hot or cold water
- Take any pain medication without consulting a health care professional
- Drink alcohol or use recreational drugs
- Attempt to trap the snake



AVAILABLE
24 / 7 / 365

Visit michigan.gov/dnr
to report Eastern Massasauga rattlesnake sightings.

If you are unable to move the snake yourself, contact the Wildlife Division at 517-284-9453 for a list of volunteer snake responders or permitted wildlife pest control companies to assist in moving the snake.