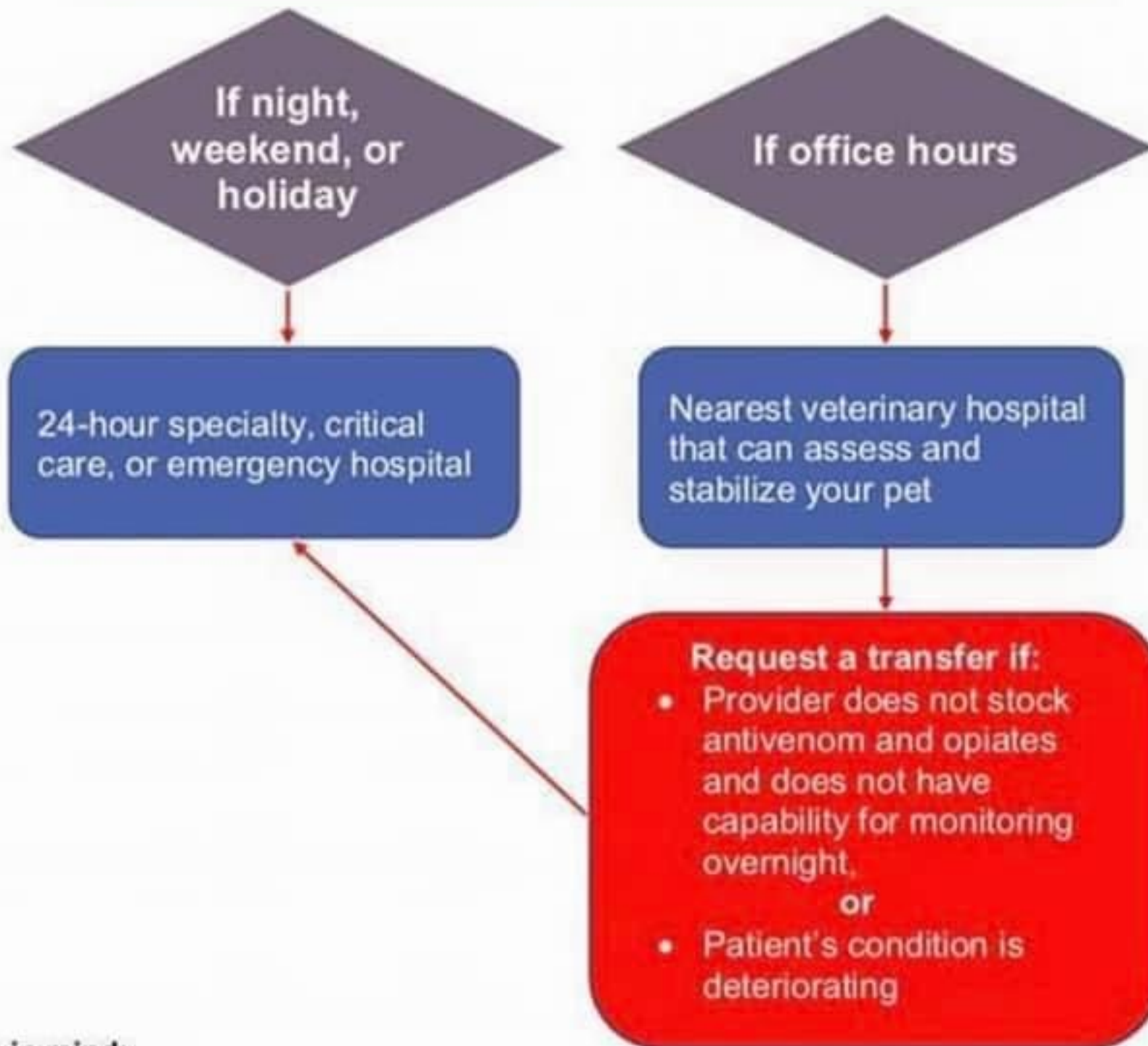


Snakebite Guidelines for Pet Owners

Jacquelyn H. Burns, DVM

- Distance yourself and pets from the snake
- Take a photo of snake if possible
- Remove collars, leashes, or harnesses
- Avoid excitement or strenuous activity
- Seek veterinary care immediately!



Keep in mind:

- After hours, do not waste valuable time trying to find a local veterinarian to treat your pet. Proceed to the nearest regional after-hour emergency clinic as soon as possible (even if it is three hours away)
- There are no limitations on when antivenom may be given. Even if you do not find your injured pet until the next day, you should still take the above steps.
- Many providers can provide excellent care during the day, but may need to transfer to a regional emergency clinic for overnight care

TREATING PIT VIPER ENVENOMATIONS IN DOGS AND CATS: DOS AND DON'TS

Jacquelyn H. Burns, DVM

INDICATED

Recommended	Why
Antivenom	Nothing else addresses swelling, bruising, tissue damage, pain, hematologic changes, and long-term effects like antivenom administered promptly
IV Fluids	Precise control of patient hydration
Pain management	Pit viper envenomation is an extremely painful condition
Blood test monitoring	Help assess the progression or regression of hematologic changes

CONTRAINDICATED

Recommended against	Why not
NSAIDS	NSAIDS such as aspirin or ibuprofen increase bleeding tendencies which are already increased due to the venom
Subcutaneous fluids	Administering fluids under the skin causes some bruising. The tendency to bruise is already increased due to the venom.

OF NO BENEFIT / NOT INDICATED

Of No Benefit	Why Not
Benadryl	<p>Benadryl is an antihistamine that is useful in treating swelling and inflammation mediated by a body chemical called histamine. Histamines are released by the body in cases of allergy, allergic reactions, bee, wasp, and hornet stings.</p> <p>Histamines are <i>not released</i> during snake envenomations, so using antihistamines to address swelling related to venom is of zero benefit.</p> <p>Swelling in envenomation is caused by massive tissue damage mediated by hemotoxins, cytotoxins, and myotoxins, not by histamine release.</p>
Corticosteroids	Corticosteroids or "cortisone" is of no benefit in addressing swelling, redness, bruising or pain caused by the hemotoxins, cytotoxins, and myotoxins in snake venom.
Antibiotics	Antibiotics prescribed during the initial treatment of envenomation are unnecessary. Antibiotics should be prescribed <i>only</i> if infection has been diagnosed.

For more information, join the [National Veterinary Snakebite Support](#) Facebook page.