



GUIDELINE

Venom Detection

Scope (Staff):	All Emergency Department Clinicians
Scope (Area):	Emergency Department

This document should be read in conjunction with this DISCLAIMER
<http://kidshealthwa.com/about/disclaimer/>

Venom Detection

- The Snake Venom Detection Kit (SVDK) is not kept in the Emergency Department, but in Haematology
- ED staff collect the specimens and send to Haematology
- For advice on the management of snake bites contact **Poisons Information: 131126** or refer to the [Toxicology Handbook](#)

Background

- Venom is most likely to be detected in a swab from the **bite site**
- Urine may be tested in patients who show evidence of envenomation when the bite site swab was inconclusive
- As a last resort venom stained clothing may be tested
- Blood should not be sent for venom detection

Indications


- The SVDK is **not** used to determine if the patient has been envenomed
- Evidence of envenomation is based on history, physical examination and the results of laboratory tests
- If envenomation is **confirmed**, the (SVDK is used by the laboratory to determine the correct monovalent antivenom to be used for **treatment**

Preparation

Staff

- Specimen collection is to be carried out by an ED Doctor
- Specimens are then sent to Haematology for testing

Equipment

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buffered swab • Personal protective equipment (PPE) – gloves • Saline solution ampoules • Yellow top (urine collection) jar 	 Buffered swab
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Procedure

Ensure use of personal protective equipment

Bite site specimen (preferred)

- Moisten the buffered swab with 0.9% saline solution
- Do not remove the pressure immobilisation bandage
- Separate the bandage to create a small window to expose the bite site
- Swab the bite site thoroughly (the puncture marks can be gently squeezed)
- Send the labelled swab immediately to Haematology with “snake venom detection” written on request form
- Do not delay while other specimens are collected

Urine specimen (alternative specimen if envenomation is clinically likely, but bite site specimen negative or inconclusive)

- Collect a fresh urine sample in a yellow-top urine collection jar
- Send the labelled sample to the Haematology lab with “snake venom detection” written on request form

Clothing specimen (alternative specimen)

- Venom stained clothing or bandage can be tested
- Cut a small piece of the affected cloth – about 1cm square
- Place cloth in a dry yellow-top urine collection jar
- Send the labelled specimen to Haematology with “snake venom detection” written on request form




Tags

bite, detection, kit, snake, svdk, type, venom, venom detection kit

References

- Murray L, Daly F, Little M, Cadogan M. [Toxicology Handbook](#). 2nd Ed. Elsevier Australia; 2011.

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