

Australian Venom
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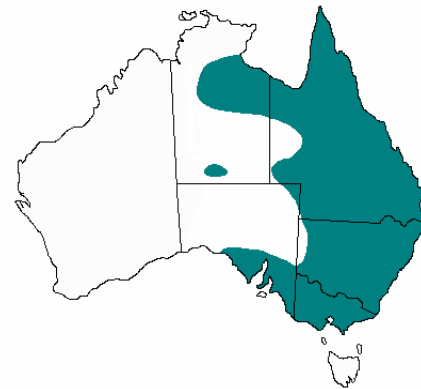
The eastern brown snake has been responsible for more deaths in Australia in the last 30 years than any other species of venomous animal. They are distributed throughout eastern Australia except Tasmania, and are often found close to human dwellings. Its venom is measured as the second most potent of all Australian snake species. Death may occur within minutes of its bite.

**First aid for brown snake bite is Pressure-Immobilisation Bandaging**

Distribution The eastern brown snake is found throughout the eastern half of Australia, with the exception of Tasmania.

Habitat It prefers dry country to swampy areas, and may be found in urban areas.

Behaviour This snake is active mostly by day, except in very hot weather. It feeds on rats, mice, birds, lizards and other snakes and is therefore attracted to barns and farms. It has a 'nervous' temperament and strikes very rapidly, with its mouth open.



Appearance Many other species of snake may be coloured brown and some 'brown snakes' may be other colours. Young brown snakes are banded in dark grey or black, and have a broad band on the back of their heads. By three years of age, the bands disappear, and the adult is usually uniform in colour, ranging through light or dark brown to orange-yellow or even black. The shape is streamlined, and the head is not distinct. The average length is approximately 1.5 m, and the largest recorded length 2.4 m.

Clinical Importance Often a bite from a brown snake goes unnoticed, since it rarely causes pain or swelling. Most often this snake kills because its venom prevents the blood clotting. This can happen very rapidly and be associated with collapse and even cardiac arrest. Less commonly it can cause paralysis, causing difficulty breathing. CSL Ltd produce an antivenom and multiple vials may be needed in severe cases.



Photo courtesy P. Mirtschin, Venom Supplies