

The Wild, Wild, West!

Although Malibu has many adorable looking animals and the wildlife is abundant, it is important to know the risks involved in coming in contact with the wild critters around campus and in the area.

Raccoons can easily be mistaken to be similar to your very large, friendly house cat, but be aware that they commonly carry many dangerous infections such as rabies and may bite if they feel threatened. It is very dangerous to try to pet, feed, or capture the seemingly harmless looking bandits.

Many deer also call the Pepperdine campus home and they are fun to watch, but keep your distance. If one seems sick or has been hit by a car, do not go to rescue the animal. Call Animal Control or Department of Public Safety to come and take care of the situation.

Hiking is one of the many fun outdoor activities to do around campus. Please be aware that many snakes, including rattle snakes, inhabit the hills and wilderness around campus. Mosquitos may be common at certain times of the year and may carry a flu-like illness called West Nile Virus. In addition, ticks may live on the trees and bushes. It is advised to always stay on the trails and avoid hiking at dawn or dusk. Protect yourself by wearing long sleeves and long pants as well as close-toed shoes. If you are bitten by a snake, avoid moving as much as possible and call 911 immediately. Always have a friend check for tick bites after the hike from scalp to toe. If you have a tick bite, remove the tick by pulling it straight out with a pair of tweezers. Try to keep the tick intact and pull gently. Eventually the tick will give up and let go. Save the tick in a ziplock bag and seek medical attention if you experience redness or swelling at the site, an expanding ring of redness, or the feeling of flu-like symptoms within the next week after being bitten.

Ticks can carry diseases such as Lyme disease and Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever. Fortunately, only a very low percentage of ticks in this area carry Lyme disease and other diseases are even more rare. In addition, Lyme Disease is unlikely to be transmitted unless the tick stays attached for greater than 36 hours. More common areas for tick infections are mountainous areas in Northern California, Mid-west, and East Coast regions. If you need assistance removing a tick or develop a rash after a tick bite, or develop a circular red rash even without a history of a tick bite, please call the Student Health Center to schedule an evaluation.

If you have any questions about these issues or other health issues, please go to www.cdc.gov or contact the Student Health Center at 310-506-43616 option 3.