



Sting stab strike!

Blue-ring octopus

What do they look like? The blue-ring octopus is very small, growing to a maximum size of 20 centimetres when its tentacles are stretched out and weighing only 100 grams. Like all octopuses, it has a soft sack-like body and eight arms covered with suckers. Its beak or mouth is the only hard part of its body, so it is able to squeeze through very tiny spaces. A blue-ring octopus is usually a light-brown or dark yellow colour but rapidly changes colour when agitated. Its body becomes bright yellow and iridescent blue rings or bars appear as a warning to predators.

Where do they live? They live in tide pools and shallow reefs all around Australia.

Why are they dangerous? They are one of the world's most venomous animals. Despite its small size, the blue-ringed octopus carries enough venom to kill 26 adult humans within minutes. The venom is in their saliva and enters your system when they bite you.

How to avoid them. When exploring rock pools, look but don't touch. The blue-ring octopus is so small and well camouflaged that they are difficult to see. Don't touch any small octopuses, they might be a blue-ring and by the time you see the telltale rings, it's too late!

What to do if you get hurt. Call 000 immediately. Apply a pressure immobilisation bandage to the bite site. Start, and continue CPR. Even if it doesn't seem to be working... keep going. The patient might survive if you can keep their heart beating until the poison wears off and they will suddenly start breathing on their own again.

