



Palmetto Poison Center

For Immediate Release:

July 28, 2009

Contact: William Richardson, MD
Medical Director
whrichardson@sc.rr.com

Jill Michels, PharmD
Managing Director
Michels@cop.sc.edu

Be snake safe in the summertime

The Palmetto Poison Center is warning people to watch their step and pay close attention while enjoying summer activities outside this summer. During these warm months snakes are on the move and they will continue their travel through the fall as their mating season ends. There are several venomous snakes in South Carolina including the canebrake rattlesnake, pigmy rattlesnake, timber rattlesnake, copperhead, cottonmouth, and coral snake. Snakes generally are not aggressive and bite for two main reasons: to obtain food and to defend against prey.

The center receives over one hundred phone calls concerning snake bites every year. We provide treatment information to the public and hospitals throughout the state. While the majority of poisonous snake bites are not fatal, they can cause major complications. If you are bitten by a snake here are some things you need to know:

- Remain calm
- Wash the bite with soap and water
- Do not apply a tourniquet or ice
- Do not try to suck the venom from the bite site
- Call the Palmetto Poison Center and seek immediate medical attention

“Be careful when working out in the yard, especially in dense brush. Snakes blend in very well to their environment. Many people are often bitten while gardening” states Dr. Jill Michels a Clinical Pharmacist and Director of the Palmetto Poison Center at USC’s South Carolina

College of Pharmacy. “ We recommend treating all snakes as poisonous and advise against picking them up.”

The Palmetto Poison Center is staffed by trained nurses and pharmacists who can provide treatment information when a snake bite has occurred. Additionally, the Palmetto Poison Center provides poison prevention education around the state to inform parents and youngsters not only about the dangers of household poisonings, but also outdoor exposure to poisonous agents. From medication errors to insect bites, poisonous plants, pesticides and other household chemicals, the Palmetto Poison Center can provide expert advice. The Center provides services to over 4 million residents in all 46 counties of South Carolina. Services are free, confidential and available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. To contact the Palmetto Poison Center, call 1-800-222-1222.