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CALIFORNIA POISON CONTROL
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Poison Control Warns Residents in 12 State Area about Rattlesnakes

June 25, 2015 – San Francisco, CA – California Poison Control System (CPCS) (http://www.calpoison.org) reminds residents that with warm weather, rattlesnakes are more likely to be found on hiking trails and sunning in rural areas. Even baby rattlesnakes possess dangerous venom as soon as they hatch.

A rattlesnake bite can produce painful swelling, bruising, tissue destruction, bleeding problems and, in rare cases, can be fatal. Most bites occur between the months of April and October. (Click this link to hear the sound a rattlesnake makes (http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/22/Rattlesnake.ogg).

"While the odds of being bitten by a rattlesnake are small (more than 300 cases are reported to CPCS annually in California, with additional other cases managed by physicians and hospitals) compared to other environmental injuries, by following some precautions outdoors, people can minimize the chance of being bitten," says Dr. Cyrus Rangan, Assistant Medical Director for the CPCS. He added that children are naturally curious, and may look into open pipes or under rocks, and kick loose brush and bushes where snakes may sometimes lie quietly. Remember that rattlesnakes do not always make a rattling sound, so someone can be standing next to a rattlesnake and not even know it. Children need to be carefully supervised outside, especially in wooded and desert areas where snakes tend to live. Some rattlesnake bite prevention tips include:

- Wear boots and long pants when hiking.
- Stay on trails when hiking, away from underbrush and tall weeds.
- Do not touch or disturb a snake, even if it appears dead.
- Carefully inspect logs or rocks before sitting on them.
- Never hike alone in remote areas. Always have someone with you who can assist in an emergency.
- Teach children to respect snakes and to leave them alone.

Dr. Rangan says the symptoms of a rattlesnake bite may include extreme pain and swelling at the location of the bite; excessive bleeding; nausea; swelling in the mouth and throat making it difficult to breathe; lightheadedness; drooling; and even collapse and shock in rare cases.

"If you are bitten by a rattlesnake, immediate medical attention is critical," Dr. Rangan said. "Severe or even life-threatening symptoms may occur within minutes after the bite, or in other cases may begin after couple of hours. In either event, your best bet is to get to a hospital as soon as you can." He added that the following steps are important for any rattlesnake bite:

- Get immediate medical attention.
- Do not apply ice, do not use a tourniquet or constricting band, do not try to suck out the venom, and do not use any device to cut or slice the bite site.
- Keep calm, do not run and keep the affected extremity elevated during transport to a medical facility.

Many veterinarians now carry rattlesnake anti-venom and rattlesnake vaccines for dogs and other pets that are bitten. Contact your veterinarian for more information.

About CPCS

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