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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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***Springtime Surge: Oklahoma Poison Center Warns of Outdoor Hazards as Snake Bite Season Begins***

**OKLAHOMA CITY —** As Oklahomans shake off the chill of winter and head outdoors to enjoy the sunshine, the Oklahoma Poison Center is urging residents to be aware of potential dangers that come with springtime adventures.

From backyard gardens to wooded hiking trails, nature is in full bloom—and so are the calls to the Oklahoma Poison Center. Spring marks the busiest time of year for the poison center, with spikes in exposures to venomous snakes, spiders, insects, and toxic plants.

“Many people don’t realize we’re not just here for household poisonings,” said Kristie Edelen, Pharm.D., DABAT, Managing Director of the Oklahoma Poison Center. “We’re also the go-to resource for snake bites, spider bites, scorpion stings, poisonous plants, and mushroom ingestions. If it can sting, bite, or be accidentally eaten, we can help.”

In 2024 alone, the Oklahoma Poison Center helped manage **363 snake bites** across the state. That included:

* **160 copperhead bites**
* **38 rattlesnake bites**
* **12 cottonmouth bites**
* **102 bites from unidentified venomous snakes**
* **34 unknown snake bites (venom status undetermined)**
* **15 non-venomous snake bites**
* **2 bites from exotic snakes**

“These numbers serve as a powerful reminder,” said Edelen. “Whether it’s a curious child who eats a berry or a hiker who surprises a snake, poisonings can happen to anyone. The best thing you can do is stay alert—and save our number in your phone: 1-800-222-1222.”

**Know Before You Go: Outdoor Safety Tips**

**Snake Safety**

* Don’t reach where you can’t see.
* Never try to pick up or kill a snake—it may bite even after death.
* If bitten, stay calm, wash the area with soap and water, and call the Oklahoma Poison Center immediately.

**Spider & Scorpion Awareness**

* Watch for black widow and brown recluse spiders in garages, woodpiles, and sheds.
* Scorpion stings can cause temporary numbness or a metallic taste but are rarely dangerous in Oklahoma.

**Plant & Mushroom Dangers**

* Many common Oklahoma plants—like oleander, foxglove, and pokeweed—are toxic if ingested.
* Wild mushrooms are especially risky, and symptoms may not appear for hours.

**When in Doubt, Call Us**

The Oklahoma Poison Center is staffed 24/7 by specially trained pharmacists and nurses who provide fast, expert advice for both the public and healthcare providers. You don’t need to guess whether something is poisonous, just call **1-800-222-1222.**

Spring is meant to be enjoyed. With a little caution and a lot of awareness, you can keep yourself and your family safe while exploring Oklahoma’s great outdoors.

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About Oklahoma Poison Center

Oklahoma Poison Center is dedicated to providing expert advice and support in cases of poisoning and exposure to harmful substances. Our mission is to prevent poisonings and reduce their impact through education, prevention, and providing emergency treatment recommendations. The Oklahoma Poison Center is a program of the University of Oklahoma College of Pharmacy.

The University of Oklahoma Health Sciences

The University of Oklahoma Health Sciences is one of the nation’s few academic health centers with all health professions colleges — Allied Health, Dentistry, Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Public Health, Graduate Studies and School of Community Medicine. OU Health Sciences serves approximately 4,000 students in more than 70 undergraduate and graduate degree programs on campuses in Oklahoma City and Tulsa and is the academic and research partner of OU Health, the state’s only comprehensive academic healthcare system. OU Health Sciences is ranked 129 out of over 2,849 institutions in funding received from the National Institutes of Health, according to the Blue Ridge Institute for Medical Research. For more information, visit ouhsc.edu.