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**MEDIA ALERT  
NOVEMBER 2007**

**MILD TEMPERATURES PUT SNAKES ON THE MOVE**

***Experts Available to Provide Tips and Dispel Myths  
about Snakebite Prevention and Treatment***

**WHAT:** The cooler temperatures mean more comfortable hunting, fishing and hiking for many people living in or visiting temperate climates this fall. However, the temperature change also means that snakes are more active than they were during the hot summer months. Outdoor enthusiasts and anyone who may come in contact with a venomous snake need to understand how to best avoid snakebite and what to do if a bite does occur.

**WHY:** The longer medical treatment is delayed, the greater the risk of tissue damage, impaired mobility or even death. In addition to seeking immediate treatment, people need to know:

- Trying to capture or kill a snake often leads to a second bite --leave the snake alone. Identification is not necessary for treatment.
- Despite what is shown in movies, don't cut the bite area and suck out the poison. This can lead to more tissue damage.
- Ice compresses and tourniquets are not recommended and may, in fact, cause more harm to the bite area.

Moreover, since snakebite incidents are random and effective treatment is time sensitive, area hospitals must always be adequately stocked with antivenom and prepared to treat bite victims - no matter the season or the number of bites seen thus far.

**WHO:** This information is critical to those who plan to hunt, fish, hike or take part in any outdoor activity in the upcoming months, especially in mild climates. And, as demonstrated by recent reports of people across the country receiving bites inside their home or garage, the need for

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this information extends beyond outdoor enthusiasts. Pet snake owners are also potential bite victims and must be informed. Finally, it is imperative that medical professionals, including emergency doctors, nurses and hospital pharmacists, be armed with accurate information and snakebite antivenom.

**Additional resources for media:** Interviews are available with regional and national snake experts to talk about snakebite prevention, misperceptions and treatment.

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