

# DOG BITE PREVENTION



Each year over 4.5 million people are bitten by dogs. One in five dog bites result in injuries that require medical attention. Children are the most common victim. The following prevention measures can help to reduce the risk of dog bites and zoonotic diseases that can be transmitted from bites.

## Pet Behavior

- **Carefully select your pet. Before selecting a dog,**
  - Consult a veterinarian or animal behaviorist to learn what breed is suitable for your household and lifestyle.
- **Spend time with a pet before buying or adopting it**
  - Any pet with a history of aggression should NOT be kept in a household with children
  - Use caution when bringing pets into homes with an infant or toddler
- **To reduce the risk of aggression**
  - Spay or neuter dogs and cats
  - Avoid aggressive games and rough play with pets
- **Socialize and train your dog**
  - Take your dog to obedience or behavioral training classes
  - Teach basic commands (sit, stay, no, come)
  - Teach submissive behaviors, such as rolling over to expose its abdomen
  - Use a leash in public to ensure you can control your dog
- **Seek professional advice immediately if a dog develops aggressive or undesirable behaviors.**
- **Your veterinarian can be a source of advice on bite prevention and behavior modification issues for pets.**

## Bite Wound Care and Management

Bites can cause tissue damage but can also become infected with bacteria from the animal's mouth. Improperly treated bites (and scratches) can result in infection.

To reduce the risk of infection or transmission of zoonotic diseases, proper bite wound care involves:

- **Promptly clean wounds with soap and water, then an antiseptic (e.g., hydrogen peroxide)**
- **Consult your physician if:**
  - The injury is a deep puncture wound
  - Extensive or deep tissue damage occurred
  - The wound is severely bleeding
  - A wound does not heal properly or shows signs of infection (e.g. redness, swelling)

## Bite Prevention Actions

Dog bites occur most commonly in children. Never leave infants or children alone with ANY dog. Teach children the following bite prevention actions to avoid being bitten.

- **Never approach a strange dog**
- **Avoid direct eye contact with a dog**
- **If a strange dog approaches you**
  - Stand still and tall with your hands crossed across your chest— "stand like a tree"
  - Do not run away
  - Do not yell or scream
  - Do not look the dog directly in the eye
- **If a strange dog knocks you down**
  - Roll into a ball or flat on the ground
  - Cover your ears with your hands
  - Lie still ("lie like a log") until the dog leaves
- **Try to keep an object (jacket, backpack, bicycle) between you and the dog, if the dog tries to bite you**
- **If you see a stray dog or a dog that is acting strangely**
  - Tell an adult right away
- **If a dog tries to bite you**
  - Tell an adult right away
- **Stay away from dogs that are**
  - Sleeping or eating
  - Taking care of puppies
  - Guarding their toys
  - Behind fenced yards or chained in the yard
  - In parked cars
- **Do not approach a dog unless an adult is present**
- **Before petting any dog,**
  - Ask permission from the owner
  - Let the dog see you and sniff you before petting it

## For More Information

### Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - National Center for Injury Prevention and Control

Dog Bite Prevention at <http://www.cdc.gov/homeandrecreationalafety/dog-bites/biteprevention.html>

### American Veterinary Medical Association

Dog Bite Prevention at <https://www.avma.org/public/Pages/Dog-Bite-Prevention.aspx>

### The Humane Society of the United States.

How to Avoid a Dog Bite at [http://www.humanesociety.org/animals/dogs/tips/avoid\\_dog\\_bites.html](http://www.humanesociety.org/animals/dogs/tips/avoid_dog_bites.html)