



Dog Bite Prevention

How to Prevent Dog Bites

What is the Problem?

In the United States, 4.5 million Americans are bitten by dogs each year and approximately one out of every five (885,000) of those who are bitten, require medical attention.¹ In 2006 alone, more than 31,000 people underwent reconstructive surgery as a result of being bitten by dogs.² There are several ways to prevent being bitten by a dog.



Who is at Risk?

Children, adult males, and people with dogs in their homes are at a higher risk for incurring a dog bite-related injury.³

- Children. The rate, although decreasing, of dog bite-related injuries is highest for those ages 5 to 9 years, and children are more likely than adults to receive medical attention for dog bites.⁴
- Adult Males. Among adults, males are more likely than females to be bitten by a dog.⁵
- People with dogs in their homes. Having a dog in the household is associated with a higher incidence of dog bites and as the number of dogs in the home increases, so does the incidence of dog bites.⁶

Prevention Tips

Dog bites are for the most part, a preventable public health problem. Adults and children can learn to reduce their chances of being bitten by a dog by following the tips below:

- Never approach an unfamiliar dog.⁷
- Never run and scream from a dog and try to avoid direct eye contact with an unfamiliar dog.⁸
- Remain motionless when approached by an unknown dog.⁹
- If knocked over by a dog, roll into a ball and lie still.¹⁰
- Children should never play with a dog unless supervised by an adult.¹¹
- Do not disturb a dog that is sleeping, eating, or caring for puppies.¹²
- Do not pet a dog without allowing it to see and sniff you first.¹³



Plan of the Week (POW):

Dog bites are a largely preventable public health problem, and adults and children can learn to reduce their chances of being bitten.¹⁴ **ALWAYS** remember to consult a professional (e.g., veterinarian, animal behaviorist, or responsible breeder) before bringing any dogs into your household. These professionals will be able to advise you as to what breed will best fit your household. To prevent dog bites from occurring, **NEVER** approach an unfamiliar dog, run and scream from a dog, disturb a sleeping, eating, or dog that is caring for puppies, and immediately report stray dogs or dogs displaying unusual behavior.¹⁵

References

- 1-15 Dog Bite Prevention. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). <http://www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Dog-Bites/biteprevention.html>. Updated 14 May 2009. Accessed 13 May 2013.

NMCPHC Injury Prevention and Violence Free Living Webpage
<http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/health-promotion/injury-violence-free-living/Pages/injury-violence-free-living.aspx>

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