

Dogs and biting



- **NEVER try to break up fighting dogs.** In our records, this seems to be the most common cause of dog bites.
- **NEVER disturb a dog** that is sleeping, eating or taking care of pups.
- **NEVER run up behind a dog** and try to pet it (even one you know). **ALWAYS** let a dog know you are there. Let it see and sniff you.
- **NEVER approach a dog** that is restrained or confined (chained, tied, or penned). It may feel threatened or frightened and may bite. **NEVER enter a yard** or house where a dog is present.
- **NEVER leave a child alone** with a dog. A child's actions may inadvertently trigger an unwanted response and the child may get bitten.



- **NEVER tease a dog**, whether it is yours or someone else's, by barking, making faces, shouting, throwing things, etc.
- **NEVER stare into a dog's eyes.** That is how dogs challenge each other to fight.



- **NEVER run past or turn your back on a dog and run away.** A dog's natural instinct is to chase and catch its prey.
- **NEVER assume that a strange dog will be friendly.** You may think you know dogs, but that strange dog doesn't know you. It may see you as an intruder or a threat.
- **ALWAYS ask the owner's permission** before you approach or pet a strange dog. If the owner is not there, leave the dog alone.
- **ALWAYS try to be relaxed** and calm around dogs. Erratic movements may startle a dog.
- **Dogs love to play rough** with each other, so do not shout, scream or wave your arms when playing with dogs. These actions can excite them and trigger their chase response.
- **BE CAREFUL when handling a dog that is in pain or injured.**



- **BE SURE to get your dogs spayed or neutered.** Unaltered males will fight over unaltered females and you may get bitten as you try to stop a dog fight.

(Some info from www.zerobitesdogtraining.com)

Cats and biting



Cats often bite because of:

- **Fear/defensive aggression.** If a cat feels threatened or afraid, is startled by a loud noise, is defending itself from harm and thinks there is no escape, it may bite. This is the most common reason cats bite people.
- **Play-related aggression.** Rough and persistent play oftentimes results in injury to people or other animals. This is often seen in young cats whose owners may have encouraged "attacks" on hands and feet.
- **Redirected aggression** occurs when a cat indoors sees a cat outdoors invading his territory. The indoor cat may become aroused and ready to attack, then chase another cat or a person inside the house.
- **Predatory aggression** is usually preceded by chasing, stalking, and other hunting behavior. Cats will sometimes hunt prey even if they are well-fed, and they can learn to hunt even if their mother did not.
- **Pain-induced aggression.** Cats may become aggressive and bite if they hurt because of an injury, arthritis or other painful condition.
- **Maternal aggression.** Mothers with a new litter of kittens may become very protective and aggressive toward anyone who attempts to approach the kittens.
- **Irritable aggression.** It is not uncommon for some cats to bite after being petted for a time.

Animal Bites

■ AVOIDING BITES

- **PAY ATTENTION to how your cat is acting.** If it crouches when you approach, flattens its ears, dilates its pupils, twitches its tail, growls or hisses, it may be likely to bite or scratch when you attempt to handle it.
- **DON'T force your cat to do something it doesn't want to do.** If your cat is trying to avoid someone, don't force it to interact with them.
- **DON'T play roughly with kittens** or encourage them to pounce on or attack hands or feet. Direct playful attacks onto toys or other appropriate objects.
- **DON'T use punishment.** Cats do not respond well to being punished, yelled at or hit. They are likely to become more frightened if you punish them, which will cause them to avoid you or to become even more aggressive as a way to defend themselves.
- **BE SURE to get your cats spayed or neutered.** Unaltered males will fight over unaltered females and you may get bitten as you try to separate fighting cats.

(From www.ahshc.org)

If you are bitten

- Wash the wound thoroughly with soap and water and apply an antibacterial salve. Keep an eye on it and contact your doctor if it becomes infected.
- Get a tetanus shot within 72 hours of the bite if you have not received one within the past 7 years. You can get one at your local health department or from your doctor.

- Animal bites need to be reported to the local health department.
- Domestic dogs and cats can be quarantined at the owner's home for 10 days and watched for any signs of rabies.
- Stray dogs and cats can be quarantined by Animal Control.
- If you are bitten by a wild or stray animal that can't be found, call your local health department about the possibility of getting rabies shots. Rabies is FATAL, so don't be lackadaisical.

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Harrison County Health Department

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www.harrisoncountyhealth.com

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Harrison County Animal Control

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How to avoid being bitten by dogs and cats