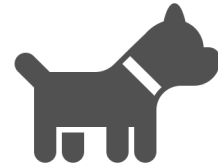


Dog Bite Prevention for Parents



Dog bites rarely happen unprovoked¹. It is important that young children learn how to treat dogs and interpret their behavior to avoid dog aggressive behavior and bites. Parents should know that bites can happen both with familiar dogs and strange dogs, though most bites happen in the home and are provoked by actions that children may be unaware could upset dogs². Children under the age of five are at the highest risk of sustaining severe injuries compared to other age groups, and often sustain injuries to the head and neck³. Bite risk can be lowered for children of all ages if they know strategies for approaching known dogs and avoiding potentially aggressive strange dogs.

Prevention Strategies

When interacting with a **familiar dog**, your child should:

- **Avoid bothering a dog when it's eating**, asleep, or taking care of puppies.
- Avoid yelling, running, hitting or making sudden movements toward the dog.
- Never squeeze dogs too tight, drop them, fall on them, or jump on them.
- Do not tease dogs by taking their toys, food or treats, or by pretending to hit or kick.
- Never pull a dog's ears or tail, climb on or try to ride dogs.
- Never take a toy or bone away from a dog or play tug of war with a dog.
- Don't try to drag a dog around. Don't try to dress up a dog.
- Never crowd a dog or back it into a corner.

Safe ways to play with familiar dogs include:

- Scratching the dog on the chest or the side of the neck. Don't hug or kiss a dog on the face.
- When feeding a dog, put the treat in your palm with your fingers and thumb held close together. Never feed a dog a treat with your fingers.

When encountering a **strange dog**:

- If the owner is with the dog, **always** ask the owner for permission to pet their dog.
- Avoid unknown dogs. If you see a dog you don't know and it's wandering around loose and unsupervised, avoid the dog.
- **"Be a tree"** if a strange dog approaches – teach kids to stand still, like a tree. Trees are boring and the dog will eventually go away. This works for strange dogs and anytime the family dog gets too frisky or becomes aggressive.

¹ Dog Bite Prevention: Effect of a Short Educational Intervention for Preschool Children - PMC

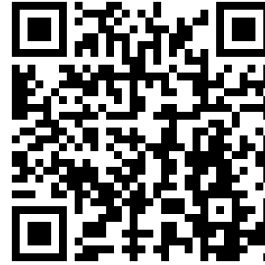
² Dog bite injuries a preventable hazard?

³ Dog bite injuries in children: a preliminary survey

Additional Resources



Dog Bite Prevention
ASPCA



7 Tips on Canine Body
Language | ASPCApro