














A dog bite is serious and traumatic, especially for children. Being bitten by a dog can make a child distrust not only the dog that bit them, but also all dogs that they will ever meet in the course of their lives. It's up to you as a parent to ensure your child knows what to do and how to behave around dogs.

Children are particularly at risk of dog bites for several reasons; they move fast, they have proportionally larger eyes than adults – and are at the dog's level (being smaller!) and their speed/dashing around, provokes a dog's chasing instincts. Their voices are high and high voices are not only less authoritative, they also excite dogs and scare them. Added to which, children are small, they are closer to a dog's eye level and to the floor, which is the dog's feeding level.

Rules to teach your children...

-  Never touch a dog you don't know.
-  If you do know the dog, ask permission from the owner first.
-  Even when you have permission, don't invade the dog's body space. Don't bend down or over the dog. Allow the dog to come up to you and sniff the top of your hand. If it doesn't want to come and greet you, leave it alone.
-  Don't approach a dog from behind.
-  Don't pet a dog directly on top of its head. This is threatening to the dog. Instead rub it on the chest or under the chin – this is much more submissive and shows you are not a threat.
-  Never stare at a dog and never put your face close to a dog's face. When you greet a dog, look at it briefly and then look away. Look at it again and look away. These are calming signals, again showing you are not a threat.
-  Don't tease a dog with food or toys.
-  Don't go up to a dog that has been tied up or left at the end of a chain in the garden, or outside a shop.









Rules for parents...

-  Never leave a young child alone with a dog.
-  Teach your child the right way to pet a dog (see below).
-  Teach your children how to spot the signs that a dog might bite. These include; ears back and flattened, lips parted, staring eyes with big pupils, bared teeth or quivering lips, hackles raised on the back, tense and frozen body, tail that is not wagging or is moving slowly (like a snake charmer effect). Tell your children not to approach any dog that is showing these signs.
-  Teach your children to treat dogs nicely and with respect, the way they would like to be treated themselves.
-  Never hit or kick your dog – this teaches them that hands (and feet) are something to fear. Being cross doesn't make you the boss – if we get cross, your dog will automatically think we are not reliable or trustworthy. They will also become upset and anxious and may then feel the need to defend themselves by growling or biting.

How to find out more...

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-  Tell an adult immediately if you see a dog loose in your neighbourhood – don't touch them.
-  Don't touch a dog while it is sleeping. You might startle or scare it and they could react without thinking and snap at you.
-  Never touch or go near a dog when he is eating or has a chew.
-  Don't scream and run away from a dog. If a dog comes up to you and you are scared, stand still, look away from it and put your hands into pockets (make like a 'tree') – if you don't have any pockets, fold your arms. Then walk away very slowly.
-  Remember that your dog is an animal and not a cuddly toy. Some dogs don't like being hugged. Be gentle with your dog. Don't play rough with your dog.
-  Never tease or deliberately excite your dog.
-  Don't play 'tug' with your dog.
-  Dog's do not know the difference between right and wrong. When a dog chews a shoe we consider this as bad behaviour, but does our dog know this is wrong?

REMEMBER – any dog may bite if he/she feels in danger!