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# Dog Bite Prevention

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Nearly 4.5 million Americans are bitten by dogs each year and half of those cases involve children. One in five dog bites result in injuries that are serious enough to require medical attention. These statistics are not meant to scare anyone but they can help us open our eyes to the prevention of dog bites.

Dog bites are a serious problem for both people and other dogs. Dogs can be unpredictable and any dog can bite no matter how big, small, friendly, outgoing or laid back they appear to be. Either gender or sexually altered dogs are equally capable inflicting a bite. Also breed does not play a role; a Pitbull, Golden Retriever or Labrador Retriever is just as likely to bite as a Chihuahua or Shih Tzu. There are several different reasons a dog will bite:

1. as a reaction to something
2. if they find themselves in a stressful or unfamiliar situation
3. if they are defending themselves or their territory
4. if they feel scared, startled, or threatened
5. if they are protecting something that is important to them such as their puppies, food or a toy
6. if they are not feeling well

The ways to prevent a dog bite if you are a dog owner start before you even get a dog. First avoid getting a dog as an impulse buy. Make sure you are ready for a dog and then do some research on what type of breed would be best for you. Once you know what breed would fit your lifestyle and household find a reputable breeder for that type of dog. Purchasing a dog from a pet store can mean that the dog came from a “puppy mill” and typically these puppies have not been properly socialized from an early age on.

Once you get your new dog start to work on socializing them by exposing them to different people, different size and breeds of other dogs, places and environments. The more they are exposed to at a young age the well-rounded they will be as an adult. If the puppy seems apprehensive in any given situation you should proceed slowly and give them time to adjust in a positive manner.

Another way to prevent dogs from biting is to work on and master the basic commands (come, sit, and stay) for your dog. It is best to start out in a quiet area where your puppy can concentrate solely on you. Then once they have the command mastered in that environment challenge them in situations that can be distracting to the dog. This will further reinforce the command for the dog and will allow you to be confident that they will respond to your commands under any situation. It will also reinforce that you are the one in charge and they need to respect that.

Keep your dog up to date on their vaccinations, especially their rabies vaccine. To comply with state or municipal ordinances maintain annual licensing of your dog per local requirements. Having your dog spayed or neutered will reduce the dog’s urge to roam and the potential for the dog to bite a stranger. When you are out with your dog with in public it is advisable to keep them on a 4-6 foot leash for best control. If you perceive that your dog seems uncomfortable in a situation remove them from the source of discomfort. Later you can always return to that environment and work on getting your dog to relax and accept things better. The main thing for a dog owner to remember in dog bite prevention is to have a dog that respects you and your authority and to keep your dog happy and up to date on their vaccines.

It is also important for all people in general to actively try to prevent dog bites in the first place. In a lot of situations the circumstances of the bite could have easily been prevented if the human had taken a little more caution. You should never approach a dog that you do not know especially if they are confined in a yard or in a car. Do not interrupt an unfamiliar dog while eating, sleeping, chewing on a toy or caring for puppies. These situations can all lead to dog bites because the dog is protecting something that is important to them. Also watch the dogs' body language. This can be hard to do because reading dogs can be difficult if you are unfamiliar with their body language. Work with your children to teach them about dog bites and how to prevent them. The ASPCA created a pledge that you can teach your children to teach them about dog bites.

1. I will not stare into a dog's eyes.
2. I will not tease dogs behind fences.
3. I will not go near dogs chained up in yards.
4. I will not touch a dog I see loose (off-leash) outside.
5. If I see a loose dog, I will tell an adult immediately.
6. I will not run and scream if a loose dog comes near me.
7. I will stand very still (like a tree), and will be very quiet if a dog comes near me.
8. I will not touch or play with a dog while he or she is eating.
9. I will not touch a dog when he or she is sleeping.
10. I will only pet a dog if I have received permission from the dog's owner.
11. Then I will ask permission of the dog by letting him sniff my closed hand.

If you do find yourself in a situation where you think a dog will bite back away slowly, try not to scream and do not turn your back on a dog. Also do not run, this makes you appear to be similar to a prey animal and will play into their predator/ prey instincts. Try to remain motionless with your hands at your sides and avoid eye contact with the dog. Once you notice that the dog is losing interest in you start to slowly back away. If this does not work and a dog is approaching you find something that you can "feed" the dog such as your jacket, purse or bag and if you fall to the ground curl up into a ball with your hands over your face and ears. In that situation it can be very hard but it is important to try to remain motionless and to not scream. If you are bitten by a dog wash the area with warm soapy water and seek medical attention as soon as possible.

Even with this information dog bites can still happen. Dogs make great companions but because we can't speak their language and they can't speak ours they have a hard time telling us when something is wrong or bothering them and this can lead to bites. Using all of the above information can help reduce the likelihood of a dog bite and can make your experience with your canine companion a better and stronger one.

If you have any further questions about dog bites please feel free to contact us at (920) 668-6212 or send us an email at [info@cgvet.com](mailto:info@cgvet.com). You can also learn more about dog bites at <http://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/dog-care/dog-bite-prevention>, <https://www.avma.org/public/pages/Dog-Bite-Prevention.aspx> and <https://www.avma.org/public/Pages/Teaching-children-about-dog-bite-prevention.aspx>.

If you are interested in bringing a dog into your family but unsure what breed is best for you check out the following website that can help you choose. <http://www.animalplanet.com/breed-selector/dog-breeds.html>, <http://www.pedigree.com/All-Things-Dog/Select-A-Dog/BreedMatch.aspx> and <http://www.iams.com/dog-breed-selector>.

To learn more about canine body language go to the following sites, <http://www.lovetagsatail.com/dogs-body-language-in-santa-photos/> and <http://moderndogmagazine.com/articles/how-read-your-dogs-body-language/415>.

### Body Language of Fear in Dogs

**Slight Cowering**      **Major Cowering**

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#### More Subtle Signs of Fear & Anxiety

**Licking Lips**  
when no food nearby

**Panting**  
when not hot or thirsty

**Brow Furrowed, Ears to Side**

**Moving in Slow Motion**  
walking slow on floor

**Acting Sleepy or Yawning**  
when they shouldn't be tired

**Hypervigilant**  
looking in many directions

**Suddenly Won't Eat**  
but was hungry earlier

**Moving Away**

**Facing**

Dr. Sophia Yin, DVM, MS | The Art and Science of Animal Behavior

### TALKING DOG

Dogs communicate using body language more than they do vocally. Here's a quick guide to get a good idea of what your dog is telling you. Look at the whole of the dog: head, face, body and tail to get a more accurate idea of what the dog is saying.

#### FEARFUL / ANXIOUS / STRESSED

In all cases, respect the dogs need for space and other signs of appeasement and peace! See the Doggy Do and Don'ts poster.

If not read correctly, stress, anxiety and fear often lead to behaviour commonly termed "aggressive", as the dog attempts to make it clear that they are uncomfortable. Instead fiddle on a sign of fear.

#### TAIL POSITIONS

- tail tucked
- low and wiggly
- high and tight
- low and wagging slowly

#### CONTENT / HAPPY / SOCIAL

These dogs pose no immediate threat.

#### TAIL POSITIONS

- upward
- high and wagging quickly
- sway of all degrees

THE BEHAVIOUR COMPANY | THE ORIGINAL CANINE COACHES

For further resources and information on animal training and behaviour, visit [www.TheBehaviourCompany.com](http://www.TheBehaviourCompany.com)

## HOW NOT TO GREET A DOG

Most people do this stuff and it stresses dogs out so they BITE!  
I don't care how cute you (or your kid) think Boogie is. Please show him some respect.

- 1** **DON'T** Lean over the dog & stick your hand in his face. (Thought: "SMELL MY SNEET")
- 2** **DON'T** Lean over the dog & stick your hand on top of his head. (Thought: "AW! PAT PAT PAT CUTIE DOGGIE")
- 3** **DON'T** Grab or Hug him. (Thought: "WUFFY!" "HUGGG")
- 4** **DON'T** Stare him in the eye (This is an adversarial gesture). (Thought: "STARE STARE AT MEH!!")
- 5** **DON'T** Squeal or shout in his face. (Thought: "AAAHH!! OH MY GODS SOOOO ADOORABLE!!")
- 6** **DON'T** Grab his head and kiss it (This is an invasion of space). (Thought: "THERE'S ONLY ONE THING LEFT TO DO")

Doing this to a dog who doesn't know you is like a perfect stranger giving you a giant big hug and kiss in an elevator. Wouldn't that creep you out? And wouldn't you have the right to defend yourself?

### THE CORRECT WAY:

- No Eye contact
- Let the dog approach you in his own time
- Keep either your **SIDE** or **BACK** towards the dog (non-threatening posture)
- Pat or stroke him on the **SIDE** of his face or body. Or on his back.

www.doggydoggystyle.com | Libi

## The Young Person's Guide To WOOFs and GROWLs

Dogs are different to people. Choices will show us what to do - and what not to do around dogs.

- Never** put your face near a dog's face.
- Be quiet!** and walk slowly. Dogs get scared of loud noises and fast movement.
- Always** wait for a dog to come to you. If they want to be stroked or play, they will ask!
- Never** disturb dogs when they are sleeping.
- Never** go up to a dog when they are eating.
- Never** go up to or touch a dog you don't know.
- Dogs growl when they are angry or scared. **fold your arms and walk away slowly.**

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# HOW TO GREET A DOG (AND WHAT TO AVOID)

Appropriate greetings are common sense. Imagine if someone greeted you the way many people greet dogs!

Human to Human INCORRECT	Human to Dog INCORRECT	Human to Dog CORRECT
 Avoid looking into their safety zone.	 Avoid reaching in or touching the dog's face.	 Stand a safe distance away so that you are not a threat.
 Avoid rushing up.	 Avoid rushing up.	 Approach slowly for a relaxed walk.
 Avoid interactions without asking.	 Avoid interacting with unfamiliar dogs, especially if they're not up.	 Ask if you can interact first.
 Avoid staring at people. This is scary.	 Avoid staring at or approaching head on.	 Approach sideways and look using your peripheral vision.
 Avoid leaning over.	 Avoid leaning over or looms dogs over when you change position to squat or get up.	 Stay outside the dog's bubble and present your side to the dog.
 Avoid reaching into personal space.	 Avoid reaching your hand out for the dog to sniff.	 Let the dog approach at his own rate.
 Avoid close interaction if the person is ahead of you.	 Avoid putting if the dog looks nervous or tense. Just observe him instead.	 It's OK to pet the dog if he looks relaxed, comes up to you, and seeks your attention by rubbing against you.
 Avoid hugging inappropriately.	 Avoid hugging, kissing, and patting roughly. This is too forceful and disliked by many dogs.	 Pet gently.

Dr. Sophia Yin, DVM, MS

Dr. Yin and I learned a lot from Dr. ...

For additional free dog bite prevention resources visit [www.drsophiayin.com](http://www.drsophiayin.com).