



Preventing/Avoiding Dog Bites

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that over 4.5 million people are bitten by dogs each year. A dog's instincts tell them to chase prey, guard their territory, protect their young, and defend themselves when cornered. Dogs communicate with the only tools they have – their bodies, a range of verbal sounds, and their teeth. Most dog bites are reported as "unprovoked." However, something causes a dog to bite, and victims are often taken by surprise. There are ways to protect yourself. Here's how:

Learn the Warning Signs

Most warning signs you see; others you hear. They include:

- Growling, snarling or aggressive barking.
- Shyness or fear, such as when a dog crouches, has his head low or tail between his legs. Fearful dogs can be just as dangerous as aggressive ones.
- Fur raised up, ears erect, body stiff, tail high. He's saying, "Stay away from me, or I'll do something drastic!"
- An unnaturally still or unresponsive dog. Many fighting breeds have been bred for their ability to disguise aggressive intentions.
- A dog in pain will bite anyone who touches him – even his owner.

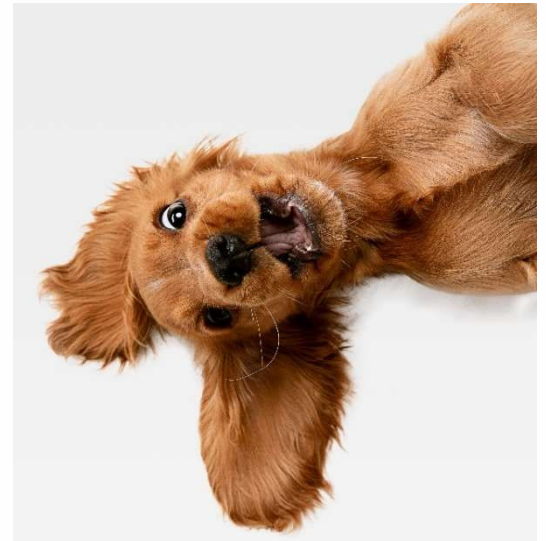


Image Source: Adobe Stock

Avoid Dangerous Situations

Follow these tips to avoid coming face-to-face with a biting dog.

- Stay away from dogs that are in cars, chained or cornered. They often feel vulnerable and will fight to protect their territory.
- Never run past a dog. Joggers and children on bicycles can trigger their instinct to chase and attack.
- Don't go near a dog that's eating, chewing, sleeping, or caring for puppies.
- Never tease a dog or play too rough.
- Be careful around older dogs. They may be blind, sensitive to touch or hearing-impaired.
- Never leave infants or children alone with a dog. According to the CDC, infants top the list for dog-related deaths.
- Never try to break up a dogfight with your hands. Use a water hose, stick, or throw a blanket over the dogs to disorient them. Children should call an adult for help.
- Keep your face away from a dog's face, especially when disciplining.

Know Self-Defense Moves

Many people are bitten because they unintentionally provoke or escalate an attack. If an aggressive dog approaches you, don't make eye contact or move suddenly. This can challenge a dog and cause him to attack. Stand motionless, like a statue. Face the dog but turn your head away. If lunged at, don't try to overpower the dog. If you're holding something, put it into his mouth. If you don't have anything in your hand, put your arm up to protect your face. If you're knocked down to the ground, don't move or scream. Curl up in a ball, face down, and cover your head with your arms. Stay in this position until the dog leaves.



Image Source: Adobe Stock

Q: How can I avoid being bitten by a dog?

A: Never approach a strange dog, especially one who's tied or confined behind a fence or in a car. Don't pet a dog—even your own—without letting him see and sniff you first. Never turn your back to a dog and run away. A dog's instinct will be to chase and catch you. Don't disturb a dog while he's sleeping, eating, chewing on a toy, or caring for puppies. Be cautious around strange dogs. Always assume that a dog who doesn't know you may see you as an intruder or a threat.

Q: What should I do if I am bitten by a dog?

A: If you are bitten or attacked by a dog, try not to panic.

- Immediately wash the wound thoroughly with soap and warm water.
- Contact your physician for additional care and advice.
- Report the bite to your local animal care and control agency. Tell the animal control official everything you know about the dog, including his owner's name and the address where he lives. If the dog is a stray, tell the animal control official what the dog looks like, where you saw him, whether you've seen him before, and in which direction he went.

Sources: The Humane Society of the United States

To access additional resources, visit the Risk Management Resource Center on www.EasternAlliance.com or contact your regional office to speak with your Risk Management Consultant- 1.855.533.3444.