

Dog Bite Prevention for Kids

Kids can be empowered to prevent dog bites by learning how to act safely around dogs. The ASPCA reports that 50 percent of all children will be bitten by a dog before their 12th birthday. Even the friendliest, sweetest dog may bite if it feels threatened, scared, or too excited. Most dog bites are from a pet, a neighbor's dog, or a friend's dog.



Talking about the Dos and Don'ts below with your child, can help them know what to do if they encounter a strange dog, are frightened by a dog, and what behavior is safe around dogs. This list was developed by West Virginia Extension Service Families & Health & 4-H Youth Development Programs, and American Humane.

DOGGIE DOS:

- Ask the dog's owner if it is OK to pet the dog.
- Let the dog smell the back of your closed hand.
- Pet the dog gently under the chin (not on the head).
- If you see a loose dog, tell an adult right away.
- Be Calm: take in a quiet voice or whisper (no shouting) and take a "time out" if you feel angry or frustrated.
- Be Slow: use slow movements, set things down carefully, and don't run when you're around dogs because this makes them excited and they may accidentally hurt you.
- Be a tree if a strange dog comes up to you. Stand straight with your feet together. Keep your hands glued to your sides like a tree trunk. Watch your roots grow by staring at the ground. Do not make eye contact with the dog.
- Be a log if you are knocked down by a strange dog. On the ground, curl into a ball with your legs together. Keep your face down. Cover the back of the neck with your fists. Put your arms over your ears. Stay quiet and still until the dog goes away.

DOGGIE DON'Ts:

- Don't tease dogs: never hit, kick, or bite a dog or pull on its ears, tail, or paws.
- Don't stare into a dog's eyes.
- Don't go near dogs chained up in yards.
- Don't run or scream if a loose dog comes near you.
- Don't touch a dog when it is sleeping, eating, or playing with a toy.
- Don't hug a dog.
- Don't bother service dogs alone while they are working.

Borrowed from "Family Health Handout: Safety. Be Safe Around Dogs." Developed by West Virginia University Extension Service Families & Health and 4-H Youth Development Programs. See the full handout at: <http://4-hyd.ext.wvu.edu/r/download/50882>. Information was also taken from the American Humane

Resources: www.americanhumane.org; www.avma.org; www.asPCA.org

