



# Dog Bite Prevention for Children



Each year in Virginia, children are treated in emergency departments for injuries related to dog bites. Dog bites can be prevented by teaching children basic safety tips. Remember, dogs may bite for no reason at all.

## TIPS

✓ Teach children basic safety around dogs and review the following regularly:

- Don't approach an unfamiliar dog.
- Don't run past, ride, or skate close to a dog on your bike or rollerblades; dogs naturally love to chase and catch things. Don't give them a reason to become excited or aggressive. Remain motionless (e.g., "be still like a tree") when approached by an unfamiliar dog.
- If you are threatened by a dog, remain calm. Don't scream. If you say anything, speak calmly and firmly. Avoid eye contact. Try to stay still until the dog leaves, or back away slowly until the dog is out of sight. Don't turn and run.
- If knocked over by a dog, roll into a ball and lie still (e.g., "be still like a log").
- Always ask an owner if you can pet the owner's dog before doing so. Do not play with a dog unless supervised by an adult.
- Immediately report stray dogs or dogs displaying unusual behavior to an adult.
- Avoid direct eye contact with a dog.
- Don't disturb a dog that is sleeping, eating, or caring for puppies.
- Don't pet a dog without allowing it to see and sniff you first.
- If bitten, immediately report the bite to an adult.

✓ Things to consider before you get a dog:

- Consult with a professional (e.g., veterinarian,

animal behaviorist, or responsible breeder) to learn about suitable breeds of dogs for your household. Dogs with histories of aggression are inappropriate in households with children.

- Never leave infants or young children alone with any dog.
- Don't play aggressive games with your dog (e.g., wrestling or tug-of-war).
- Properly socialize and train any dog entering the household.

If you or your child has been bitten, wash the wound thoroughly with soap and lots of water and then seek medical attention immediately. If possible, have information about the dog and its whereabouts so that you can share this with local authorities. Report the bite to the local health department or your local animal control office.

Virginia Dangerous Dog Registry:

The Dangerous Dog Registry provides a mechanism for consumers to determine if dangerous dogs reside in their neighborhoods and for local animal control officials to post information about dogs that have been declared dangerous by the local court. Consumers can visit the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' site at: [www.vdacs.virginia.gov/animals-dangerous-dog-registry.shtml](http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/animals-dangerous-dog-registry.shtml) to access the registry.

**911** If you or someone you know is experiencing a life threatening injury or act of violence, please dial 911 immediately.

If you would like more information on injury and violence prevention education and information, call 1-800-732-8333 or email [ivp@vdh.virginia.gov](mailto:ivp@vdh.virginia.gov)