

PREVENTING DOG BITES

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The Centers for Disease Control prepared a special report on dog-bite-related fatalities in the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report Vol. 46(21): 463-467, on May 30, 2007. Included was a list of ways to prevent dog bites:

- Realistically evaluate environment and lifestyle and consult with a professional (e.g. veterinarian, animal behaviorist, or responsible breeder) to determine suitable breeds of dogs for consideration.
- Dogs with histories of aggression are inappropriate for households with children.
- Be sensitive to cues that a child is fearful or apprehensive about a dog and, if so, delay acquiring a dog.
- Spend time with a dog before buying or adopting it. Use caution when bringing a dog or puppy into the home of an infant or toddler.
- Spay/neuter virtually all dogs (this frequently reduces aggressive tendencies). Never leave infants or young children alone with any dog.
- Properly socialize and train any dog entering the household. Teach the dog submissive behaviors (e.g. rolling over to expose abdomen and relinquishing food without growling).
- Immediately seek professional advice (e.g. from veterinarians, animal behaviorists, or responsible breeders) if the dog develops aggressive or undesirable behaviors.
- Do not play abusive games with your dog.
- Teach children basic safety around dogs and review regularly:
 - ✓ Never approach an unfamiliar dog.
 - ✓ Never run from a dog and scream.
 - ✓ Remain motionless when approached by an unfamiliar dog (e.g. 'be still like a tree').
 - ✓ If knocked over by a dog, roll into a ball and lie still (e.g. 'be still like a log').

- ✓ Never 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.
- ✓ Do not disturb a dog who is sleeping, eating, or caring for puppies.
- ✓ Do not pet a dog without allowing it to sniff you first.
- ✓ If bitten, immediately report the bite to an adult.