



PREVENT. PROMOTE. PROTECT.

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## NEWS

### TIPS TO AVOID DOG BITES THIS SUMMER

**HAMILTON COUNTY, OHIO** – Dog bites are a largely preventable public health problem, yet 4.7 million Americans are bitten by a dog every year.\* Children are by far the most common victims but parents can teach children how to safely interact with dogs, and also learn what they should do if anyone is ever bitten by a dog.

In Hamilton County from 2005-2007, 1,589 dog bites were reported, half of which occurred in children ages 0-19 years old.+ Understanding the right behavior to use and understanding a dog's body language can make a difference when a child interacts with a dog. A child's sudden movements could startle a dog and put him on the defensive. Barking, growling, stiff legs and hair standing up on the back are all signs a dog is unsafe.

Children should:

- Never approach a strange dog. Don't make eye contact and back away slowly.
- Never tease a dog.
- Never sneak up on a dog that is eating or sleeping. Animals may bite when they are frightened.
- Always ask the owner's permission before petting a dog. Let the dog sniff your hand, and then gently pet the dog's back or sides.
- Stay away from dogs that are chained, behind fences or in cars. They may be protective of their territory.
- Never take bones, balls or other toys from a dog. Dogs are possessive.

If a child is attacked by a dog, regardless of whether the animal is a family pet, teaching the child what to do during an attack can minimize the risk and severity of the injury:

- Drop to the ground.
- Curl up in a ball.
- Protect your head and face; cover your ears.
- Try to remember what the dog looked like and where it went.

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## NEWS

“If you or your child is bitten by a dog, wash the wound thoroughly with soap and water and contact your family doctor right away,” said Hamilton County Health Commissioner Tim Ingram. “It is also important that you contact Hamilton County Public Health so we can determine that the dog’s rabies vaccinations are up to date.”

Ohio law requires that all animal bites be reported to the local health department and that the biting animal be quarantined for at least 10 days. In Hamilton County, but outside the cities of Cincinnati, Norwood, Sharonville, Springdale and St. Bernard, report bites to Hamilton County Public Health at 513-946-7832.

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*\* According to the American Veterinary Medical Association.*

*+ Data is for Hamilton County excluding the cities of Cincinnati, Norwood, Sharonville, Springdale and St. Bernard.*