

Preventing Dog Bites

Dogs can bring a lot of joy into a home. They are our friends and protectors, but sometimes they bite. Who plays a role in preventing dog bites?

- Pet owners
- Parents
- Everyone

Read this brochure to find out what we can all do to prevent getting bitten by a dog.



What should you do if you're bitten by a dog?

- Seek medical care for your wound
- Gather as much information as you can about the dog
- Report any loose dogs to your local animal control agency
- Report the bite to our department:
 - Give information to your doctor
 - Call your local animal control agency or Veterinary Public Health Program at: (213) 989-7060
 - Submit an animal bite report online:
publichealth.lacounty.gov/vet

Need more information?

**Los Angeles County
Department of Public Health
Office of Veterinary Health**

Phone: (213) 989-7060

Website: publichealth.lacounty.gov/vet/



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
Public Health

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What we can do to
stop dog bites.



What can pet owners do to prevent dog bites?

- Train your dog how to behave around others.
- Always use a leash to walk your dog.
- Teach your dog to obey basic commands like “sit” and “come.”
- Understand how your dog communicates his or her feelings.
- Keep your dog healthy.
- Spay or neuter your dog.

What can parents do to prevent their children get bitten by a dog?

In Los Angeles County, children ages 9 and younger are at greatest risk of getting bitten by a dog. It is very important for kids to learn how to be safe around dogs.



You should ALWAYS...

- Supervise your child when he or she is around a dog. Never leave them alone with a dog.
- Teach your child to respect a dog’s possessions. Don’t let them play with a dog’s toys, or bedding. Show them it’s not okay to reach into the dog’s food bowl.
- Teach your child to respect a dog’s personal space. Don’t let them play roughly with a dog or pet, kiss, or jump on a dog when it’s resting or eating.
- Teach your child to notice the warning signs of a dog that’s ready to bite:
 - Growling
 - Showing teeth
 - Cowering
- Allow your child to help in your dog’s obedience training so they learn to notice dog behaviors.

What can we do to prevent getting bitten by a dog?

- Be aware of our surroundings by being alert for loose dogs
- Be cautious when approaching an open gate, it may let a dog out

- Ask permission before petting someone else’s dog—put your hand out and allow the dog to sniff you before you pet them
- Learn to read dog body language. Dogs “talk” using their:
 - Tail
 - Ears
 - Body posture
 - Barking, whining, growling, snarling, and biting

What should we do if approached by a dog?

1. Don’t look the dog in the eye, turn a little away from the dog.
2. Cross your arms, put your hands in your armpits, and be still. Don’t scream.
3. Let the dog sniff you. Wait for it to go away, or back away slowly. Most dogs will lose interest and go away.
4. If the dog begins to bite, give away something for the dog to bite on—“feed” your backpack or jacket to the dog.
5. If you’re knocked to the ground—curl in a ball and cover your face and neck with your hands.
6. Don’t try to run or ride a bike away from an attacking dog—they can go faster than you.