

WHY DO DOGS BITE?

A dog may bite for several reasons. These include:

- 🐾 to protect itself, its young, its companions
- 🐾 to protect its territory
- 🐾 it is poorly socialised / poorly disciplined
- 🐾 bad temperament / natural aggressive tendency.

In virtually all cases (except for a rabid dog), a dog bites only when provoked. The reason for the provocation is sometimes not obvious, such as when a person unintentionally enters onto the dog's territory or if the person poses an unintended threat.

NATURE vs NURTURE

Over the years, humans have bred dogs for selected characteristics. In some cases, this has resulted in breeds with a greater propensity to bite, like the fighting dog and guard dog breeds.

Whether a dog will bite depends as much on its inherited characteristics as it does on how it is raised. A dog that is provided

with love and attention and properly socialised and disciplined will be unlikely to bite as it will be well-behaved, well-adjusted and of good temperament.



WHAT SHOULD I DO TO PREVENT MY DOG BITING?

- 🐾 Ensure it is properly socialised and disciplined
- 🐾 Consider taking it for formal obedience training
- 🐾 Get it sterilised. A sterilised dog is less likely to be aggressive
- 🐾 Control it properly at all times
- 🐾 Leash and, if necessary, muzzle it when it is in a public place

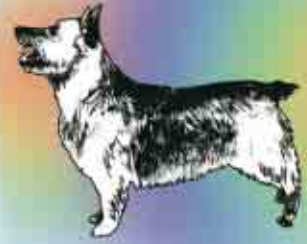
WHAT SHOULD I DO IF MY DOG BITES SOMEONE?

- 🐾 Immediately restrain / confine it properly so that it cannot bite the victim anymore.
- 🐾 Check on the victim's condition. Help him / her to wash the wound well with soap and running water. Apply a sterile / clean bandage on the wound to stop the bleeding. It is advisable that the victim also receives proper medical attention.
- 🐾 Should the incident be reported, you should cooperate fully with the authorities investigating the incident by providing information like your name, telephone number and address.
- 🐾 Consult with your veterinarian for advice about your dog's behaviour and how to correct it.

HOW TO AVOID BEING BITTEN

- 🐾 Do not be friendly with a strange dog. If you want to be friendly, put out your hand with the knuckles forward to let it sniff. When the dog appears friendly, stroke it below the chin, on the neck and gradually the rest of the body
- 🐾 If a dog approaches you, remain still and let it sniff you. Do not be afraid. Do not scream or make sudden movements. Do not run away. When you move, do so slowly making sure that you face the dog but avoid looking it in the eyes as the dog could interpret that as a threat

- 🐾 Do not threaten or tease a dog
- 🐾 Do not run past a dog
- 🐾 Do not disturb a dog that is eating, sleeping or caring for its puppies
- 🐾 Do not come between dogs that are fighting. Separate them by throwing water on them



As a rule, one should be careful if a dog does not wag its tail, growls, has its hackles standing or bares its teeth. Since a dog displaying an offensive posture is more likely to attack, it is useful to know the differences between offensive and defensive dog postures. A dog displaying an offensive posture will, in addition to the signs above, stand tall and forward, its body will be stiff, its tail held high and its ears erect and forward. The defensive dog will have its body lowered and its tail tucked down.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I GET BITTEN?

Wash the wound well with soap and running water. Express blood and dirt from your wound. When the wound is visibly clean, you may bandage it temporarily to stop the bleeding and prevent further contamination of the wound. If the bleeding has stopped, it is better to leave the wound open to heal.

See your physician as a precaution. If there is any concern that the dog could be rabid, the physician will start you on a series of rabies anti-toxoid vaccinations.

SHOULD I REPORT THE INCIDENT?

Where a dog has bitten without provocation, the incident should be reported to the Centre for Animal Welfare & Control or the Police. The owner will have to bring the dog for a veterinary examination. One should be aware however that making a false or malicious report against a dog owner can result in prosecution against oneself.

SINGAPORE IS RABIES-FREE FOR >40 YEARS

Rabies is a viral disease of the nervous system. It can affect all mammals and is transmitted through the saliva of the infected animal, usually when it bites. If not treated on time, the disease can be fatal. Vaccines are available for protection and treatment.

Singapore has achieved a rabies-free status over the years through laws that require strict quarantine and checks on dogs that have bitten and measures to control stray dogs.

Quarantine rules require that all dogs coming from countries other than Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and Ireland must be certified healthy by the veterinary authority of the country of export, vaccinated against rabies and quarantined for at least 30 days on arrival.

Under the Animals and Birds (Dog Licensing & Control) Rules, a dog that is reported to have bitten must be examined by an Agri-food and Veterinary Authority (AVA) veterinarian to ensure that it is not showing signs of rabies.



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