

# Avoiding Dog Bites



Dog bites are a serious public health threat in rural Alaska, especially for children. Here are some safety guidelines for avoiding dog bites.

## As a community:

- Require that outdoor pets must be fenced or tethered, with access to shelter, food & water.
- Host spay-neuter clinics to your community. Neutered males are less aggressive, and roam less. Spayed females cannot have unwanted litters.
- Teach dog-bite safety in schools, homes, and youth groups.

## As a dog-owner:

- Keep your own outdoor dogs.
- Feed and water pets adequately so they won't scavenge or pester youngsters for food.
- Socialize dogs at a young age and treat them kindly so they trust humans.
- Always supervise young children when they are around dogs, even your own.

## As a parent, teach your children:

### NEVER

- approach a stray or unknown dog without the owner's permission
- try to kiss, hug or pet a dog without the owner's permission
- stare a strange or unfriendly-looking dog in the eye
- pull ears, tail, tease or throw rocks at a dog
- play rough games, or discipline harshly
- disturb a dog that is eating, sleeping, chewing a bone or toy, or has new puppies
- run or scream if a dog approaches you
- try to break up a dog fight: instead, get help from an adult

### ALWAYS

- respect a dog's space
- stand very still if a stray dog approaches you and appears unfriendly (be a tree)
- ask owner's permission to approach or pet a dog, or leave the dog alone
- treat every animal kindly and respectfully - it might save your life one day

## If you are bitten or attacked by a dog:

- If knocked down, roll into a ball with fists behind your neck until the dog leaves or help arrives.
- Tell an adult immediately if you or someone else has been bitten or attacked.
- Quickly wash the wound thoroughly with soap and warm water.
- Seek prompt medical treatment from the local health authority.
- Report all details to authorities.



**Alaska Rural Veterinary Outreach, Inc.**

Veterinary care for Alaska's rural pets, people, and communities.

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