

Dog Bite Basics

(NAPS)—The good news: There are no bad breeds of dog.

The bad news: Even the best dog can bite. In fact, it's estimated by the American Veterinary Medical Association that some 4.7 million Americans are bitten every year—and most of them are children.

The better news: There are steps you can take to nip this problem in the bud as far as your family is concerned.

- According to the Humane Society, it can help to spay or neuter your dog.

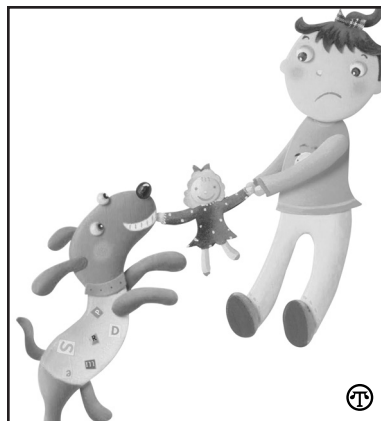
- You also have to socialize your dog so he or she is comfortable with many different types of people and situations. Make sure everyone in the house understands training techniques and is part of the training process. Teach your dog the right way to behave. Don't teach him or her to chase or attack others, even in fun. Your dog can't always understand the difference between play and real-life situations.

- Watch how your dog behaves with other animals. Aggression there may lead to problems with people. You may want to get professional help.

- Take the dog to a veterinarian regularly. Dogs who are not feeling well or plagued by pests and parasites may be more inclined to bite. Don't let your dog roam alone or spend a lot of time alone in the yard. Try not to surprise your dog. Fear or overexcitement may lead to biting.

- Let your dog eat in peace. Dogs can get defensive at the food dish. They can feel that way about their own special toys, too. Don't disturb any dog caring for puppies.

- Be careful when playing with a dog. Dogs may get too enthusiastic during wrestling matches or



If your puppy ever nips you while playing, respond with a sharp yelp (even if it doesn't hurt) to teach him that putting teeth to humans is not allowed.

tug-of-war games.

- Respect a dog's space. Dogs tend to defend their territories.

- Learn to interpret your dog's moods and look for signs of aggression such as barking, growling, showing teeth, ears laid back, stiff legs or hair standing up on his or her back.

- Never leave a baby or small child alone with a dog and teach young children not to approach strange dogs without asking the owner's permission.

- If you are threatened by a dog, remain calm. Don't scream. If you say anything, speak calmly and firmly. Avoid eye contact. Try to stay still until the dog leaves or back away slowly until the dog is out of sight. Don't turn and run.

- If you do get bitten, call your doctor, wash the wound gently with soap and water, bandage the wound and apply antibiotic ointment.

To learn more about pets and kids from the experts at Novartis Animal Health US, Inc., visit www.growingupwithpets.com.

Did You Know?

One way to prevent dog bites is to be sure your pet is healthy. Dogs plagued by pests and parasites may be more inclined to snap. To learn more from the experts at Novartis Animal Health US, Inc., visit www.growingupwithpets.com.

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