

# Your Dog Has Bitten Someone...What Now?

*A publication of the Kent County Animal Shelter*

Dog owners have a responsibility to their community to make sure that their dog does not become a threat or nuisance to others. This may be avoided by following these simple tips:

- **Spay or neuter your dog.** This reduces your dog's aggression, need to roam, territoriality, and potential to develop behavioral problems.
- **Never allow your dog to run free** in the neighborhood. Always have your dog confined or on a leash.
- **Know and obey the laws** of your city and county concerning pet ownership, including leash and licensing laws.
- **Socialize your dog**, not only with people but with other dogs and cats. Socialized pets are much less likely to bite and be aggressive toward other animals and people.
- **Correct aggressive or inappropriate behaviors right away.** Train your dog to behave properly. If you need assistance, call your veterinarian or look in the yellow pages under "pet training".
- **Dogs confined to their property can still bite.** Never leave your dog unattended while outside.
- **Keep your dog indoors whenever possible.** Indoor dogs are less likely to come into contact with strangers.
- **Pay close attention to your dog's behavioral cues** when in an unfamiliar place or with unfamiliar people. Take the appropriate steps to remove or calm your dog before the situation becomes out of control.
- **Never try to break up dog fights with your hands.** Throw a towel on the dogs or spray them with water.
- **Do not play aggressive games with your dog** (tug-of-war, wrestling, etc.).



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# Dog Bite Basics

The majority of dog bites occur in a familiar place by a dog owned by a family member or a friend. Additionally, in Kent County, children represent 50% of dog bite cases. Due to these daunting facts, it is crucial that every dog owner be responsible. This includes learning the basics about dog behavior, safety and care and also understanding and obeying the laws pertaining to dog ownership.



## Why Do Dogs Bite?

By understanding why dogs bite, dog owners can help prevent their dog from biting someone and parents can prevent their child from being bitten.

- They are protecting their territory, family, food, toys, bed, puppies or themselves.
- They don't know you.
- They feel threatened or afraid.
- They are sick, injured or in pain.
- They are irritated, uncomfortable or being teased.
- They are really excited or have a desire to chase.
- They are bred and/or trained to be aggressive.

## If your dog does bite someone:

- Wash the wound thoroughly with soap and water. Seek medical attention if needed.
  - Call the Animal Shelter at (616) 336-3210 to report the bite.



### Kent County Animal Shelter

711 Ball Ave. NE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49503  
Phone: 616-336-3210  
Fax: 616-336-2425  
[www.accesskent.com](http://www.accesskent.com)



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