

DATCP Reminds Dog Owners and Parents to Help Prevent Dog Bites

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Contact: Leeann Duwe, Public Information Officer
(608) 224-5005, leeannm.duwe@wi.gov

MADISON –The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) is reminding dog owners and parents about how they can help prevent dog bites during National Dog Bite Prevention Week April 7-13. According to the Centers for Disease Control, more than 4.5 million people are bitten by dogs each year in the U.S., with children ages 5 to 9 years old most likely to be bitten.

“Dog owners need to ensure their dog has the proper socialization skills to build a solid human-animal bond,” said Dr. Yvonne Bellay, DATCP humane program veterinarian for the Division of Animal Health. “Introducing your dog to other people and animals helps increase the level of comfort your dog has in interacting with others.”

Responsible pet ownership also helps to build a solid foundation for dog bite prevention. This includes selecting a dog that is right for you and your lifestyle, training, exercise, neutering or spaying, and keeping your dog on a leash in public places. More information about how to choose and care for a dog is available at https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/PuppyShopping.aspx.

Parents need to keep in mind that even the gentlest dog can bite under certain situations. Educating yourself and your children about how to approach a dog is key to preventing a dog bite. Individuals should avoid petting a dog, if the dog:

- Owner is not present.
- Owner tells you not to pet the dog.
- Is growling or barking.
- Is behind a fence.
- Is sleeping or eating.
- Is sick or injured.
- Is resting with her puppies or appears protective of her puppies and shows signs of stress with your presence.
- Is playing with a toy.
- Appears to be hiding or wants to be alone.

To help teach children about how to prevent dog bites, parents can use DATCP’s No Bites! coloring book available at <https://datcp.wi.gov/Documents/NoBitesColoringBook.pdf>. The coloring book provides educational dog safety tips for kids and a certificate to display their commitment to being safe around dogs.

What to Do If You Are Bitten by a Dog

If you are bitten by a dog, wash the wound with warm soapy water immediately and determine if you need medical help. Anyone who is bitten is at risk of getting rabies or other diseases and should report the incident to either the local animal control or law enforcement. If possible,

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contact the dog's owner to get the animal's health records and veterinarian contact. In Wisconsin, a dog or cat that bites a person must be quarantined for 10 days so it can be observed for signs of rabies. This is true whether or not the animal has been vaccinated for rabies. More information about rabies quarantine requirements is available at https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/RabiesQuarantineReq.aspx.

DATCP's Division of Animal Health monitors animal health and disease threats, promotes humane treatment of animals, and provides licensing and registration regulation for animals in Wisconsin. For more information about protecting animal health, visit https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/AnimalConsumerInformation.aspx.

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