



# Preventing Dog Bites



Each year there are over **4.7 million** dog bites reported in the United States. The good news is that with education dog bites are preventable! Read on to see how.

## Dog Bite Facts:

- **50%** of all dog bites are inflicted by the victim's family dog.
- Only **10%** of bites occur from an unfamiliar dog.
- Children are the most commonly bitten age group, with ages **5-9** being the most at risk.
- Senior citizens are the second most commonly bitten group.

## Why Dogs Bite:

There are a number of reasons a dog may bite, with the most common reason being fear. In a stressful, uncomfortable, or fear-provoking situation a dog may bite to defend itself or territory. Bites may also happen if a dog is protecting something of value to them such as food, their owner, or toys. Dogs who are sick or injured may also bite in an attempt to protect themselves or to be left alone.

## Ways to Prevent Dog Bites:

**Education:** Learn how to read dog body language. Then teach your family and friends! (Flip over for a dog body language diagram you can share with them).

**Socialization:** Introduce your pets to people, places, and other animals when they are young. This will help your pet feel more comfortable in all types of situations and prevent bites. If your pet is older and wary of new things consult a trainer for guidance.

**Safe Interaction:** Learn how to properly greet an unfamiliar dog and pass this information on to your children. Read the tips below to get started.

Always ask the owner for permission before petting a dog.

Always allow the dog to sniff your hand before you pet them.

If the dog backs away from you, don't follow them. Thank the owner and walk away.

Pet the dog gently on the side of their neck and back. Avoid reaching over the dog's head.



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The Connecticut Humane Society is not affiliated with any national animal welfare groups, does not receive government funding, and does not euthanize for time, space, breed or age.

# Body Language of Fear in Dogs



**Slight Cowering**



**Major Cowering**

## More Subtle Signs of Fear & Anxiety



**Licking Lips**  
when no food nearby



**Panting**  
when not hot or thirsty



**Brows Furrowed, Ears to Side**



**Moving in Slow Motion**  
walking slow on floor



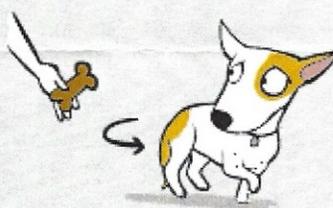
**Acting Sleepy or Yawning**  
when they shouldn't be tired



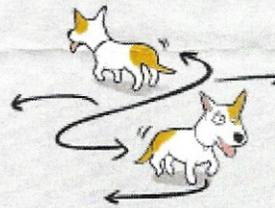
**Hypervigilant**  
looking in many directions



**Suddenly Won't Eat**  
but was hungry earlier



**Moving Away**



**Pacing**

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