

Dog Bite Wounds in People

Learn the most common circumstances for bite wounds and what you should watch out for.

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According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 4.5 million Americans are bitten by dogs each year. This is especially serious in children, as their hands and face are often involved.

A study performed by the Coalition for Living Safely with Dogs in Colorado reveals a few key conclusions: Most dogs do not bite, and most dog bites go unreported.

Even the seemingly nicest dog can bite given the right circumstances.

Most children involved are unattended and most often bitten by puppies of small breeds.

Most children bitten are boys between the ages of 9 and 10.

Child bites are generally considered worse than adult wounds.

Stray or unsupervised dogs are the most common culprits for bites in humans.

Other circumstances involve protection of food, a toy or territory.

Approximately half of all bites occur at home.

Male dogs bit twice as often as female dogs, and they cause more serious injuries.

Dogs between 1 and 4 years of age were responsible for the most wounds.

If you or your loved one suffers a dog bite, rinse the wounds with soapy water and see a physician as soon as possible. Infection is a common complication, so antibiotics will likely be prescribed.

If rabies is suspected in a dog who has bitten someone, your veterinarian should be involved, and state veterinary authorities should be notified immediately. Check with your local animal control service about the protocol for reporting an attack.