

Are you a Responsible Dog Owner?

A dog's guardian is responsible for preventing bites. If your dog bites someone, you can be prosecuted under the Dog Owners Liability Act. This can result in a fine, restrictions on your dog's freedom, or even a death sentence for your dog.

Dog Owners' Quiz

1. Is your dog spayed or neutered? Yes No
2. Are you socializing your puppy, or teaching your adult dog appropriate behaviour in different environments? Yes No
3. Do you leave your dog in your yard unsupervised? Yes No
4. Do you supervise your dog around all children and strangers? Yes No
5. Do you use the services of a responsible, qualified trainer or behaviourist to address behaviour problems? Yes No



Answers for Responsible Dog Owners

1. **YES** Spayed and neutered dogs are less likely to bite.
2. **YES** Dogs who were properly socialized as puppies are more stable and less likely to bite, but it's never too late to teach appropriate behaviour.
3. **NO** Unsupervised dogs often pick up bad habits such as territoriality and "boredom barking." Tying the dog up only makes these problems worse.
4. **YES** Dogs are like kids, and can behave very differently when Mom and Dad aren't around.
5. **YES** You can't be an expert at everything. Call a qualified trainer to address problems.

For more information, please contact:



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A word about the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Ontario SPCA):

Protecting animals since 1873, the Ontario SPCA is a registered charity comprised of 24 branches and 35 affiliated humane societies and SPCAs. The Ontario SPCA is affiliated with the Royal Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA). Under the *OSPACA Act*, Ontario SPCA investigators have the same powers as police officers when enforcing animal cruelty laws. The Society's concern is ensuring the welfare of all animals – large and small, wild and domesticated – through cruelty investigations, animal care and rehabilitation, government and industry advocacy, and public education.

Some of the information for this pamphlet was provided courtesy of The Humane Society of the United States and the British Columbia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

Ontario SPCA

GUIDE TO DOG BITE PREVENTION



- **What children and parents need to know to avoid dog bites**
- **How to reduce the chances of your dog biting**



A Guide to Safety Around Dogs

Most dogs are loving, devoted companions, but any dog may bite if provoked. The Ontario SPCA is very concerned about biting incidents and believes that understanding dog behaviour and practising responsible dog care can be major steps towards bite prevention. The Society aims to make interactions between humans and dogs as safe and enjoyable as possible.

Even Good Dogs have Bad Days



It isn't only "bad" dogs who bite. Dogs often bite when they are sick, injured or afraid. Some also bite to protect their homes, families, food and toys.

Different dogs react differently in each situation, so always be cautious, especially with dogs you don't know.



It's important to be aware of situations which may frighten or anger a dog. A neighbour's normally friendly dog may become aggressive if someone enters the house unannounced or if a child reaches through a fence to touch the dog.

Safety Guidelines for Adults and Children Around Dogs

- Don't disturb a dog who is eating, sleeping or caring for puppies.
- Don't approach a dog's food, toys or bowl.



- Never tease, chase or yell at a dog.
- Don't play roughly with dogs, or grab their ears and tails.
- Be aware that older dogs, and those with disabilities, may be easily irritated or frightened. Always treat these dogs with respect and be considerate of their limitations.
- Don't take food away from a dog or pick up dropped food in a dog's presence.
- Don't run or ride a bicycle past a dog. Some dogs like to chase fast-moving objects.
- Don't corner, crowd or stand over a dog, as this may make the dog feel defensive.
- Don't approach unattended dogs — in yards, in cars or outside stores.
- Adults should place themselves between their children and any unfamiliar dogs. Children should stand back and never put their faces close to a dog's mouth.



Around Unfamiliar Dogs

- Avoid dogs you don't know. Even if the dog is on a leash, it's safer to step into a driveway, off the sidewalk, or cross the street.
- If you can't avoid an unfamiliar dog and she approaches you, don't stare. Allow the dog to sniff you. If you're not sure she's friendly, stand still and avoid eye contact.
- Most dogs will only sniff you, then realize you're not a threat. Be aware that hats, sunglasses and uniforms agitate some dogs and may need to be removed or covered to avoid threatening the dog.
- If the dog does attack, "feed" him your back pack, jacket, purse, or anything else that can come between you and the dog. Don't try to run away as this may make matters worse.

Especially For Parents

- Teach children about safe behaviour around dogs and about the importance of treating all animals with respect. Ensuring children understand and observe the safety guidelines will reduce the chances of a negative encounter with a dog.
- When introducing a new dog into your household, observe the animal carefully and teach appropriate behaviour. A trainer who uses humane methods can help complete this safely.
- **Babies and small children require adult supervision around any dog, even their own.**
- Monitor older children with new canine companions or those of friends or family, until the dog is completely child-friendly.

