

Seven Important Rules for Safety: Dog bites hurt!

Rule #1: If you see a dog with his owner, always ask permission before you pet the dog

If a stranger came up to you and touched you, you would be scared. It's also scary for some dogs to have people come up to them, especially if the person is waving his hands around and staring at them. When dogs are not friendly or if they are afraid they might bite. And, dog bites hurt.

Rule #2: If you see a dog and there is no owner with him do not go near the dog

This rule is always true. It is especially true if the dog is in a car, behind a fence or tied up. A dog doesn't know you are a friendly person. The dog may think you are a bad person coming to hurt him or his family. The dog might bite you and dog bites hurt.

Rule #3: Even if the owner is with the dog and gives you permission to touch the dog, NEVER stand over, grab, hug or try to kiss a strange dog.

Dogs don't like strange people to get too close to them. Getting too close can make a dog feel trapped or cornered. Then he thinks he has to defend himself. If you get too close to an unfamiliar dog, guess what he might do. Right! He might bite. And, dog bites hurt.

Rule #4: Never chase a dog and do not run away from him if he starts toward you.

If a stranger ran after you, wouldn't it scare you? It scares a dog too. And you know what scared dogs do, don't you? Right! They bite.

If you want to get away from a strange dog, don't run. When you run away from a dog it makes him want to chase you. So, don't move quickly. Move slowly and the dog is less likely to chase.

Rule #5: Never stare at a dog

Dogs don't like to be stared at. It makes them feel uneasy or scared. What is staring? If your eyes are looking right into the dog's eyes as far as the dog is concerned, you are staring. If he feels threatened he might bite you.

Rule #6: Speak quietly towards dogs. Never scream, shout or jump around

Loud sounds and jumpy movements can make a dog afraid or get too excited. Either way, the dog might bite or knock you down or do something else you won't like. Dogs need for you to be calm and quiet.

Rule #7: Never, Ever, go toward a dog that is growling, barking or backing away from you.

Dogs can't talk with words. But they have other ways of telling us things. When dogs bark or growl or back away, they are saying, "Get away from me. I don't want you near me. Leave me alone." Do what they say.

Please follow these simple rules and teach your children them, however most dogs are friendly. They enjoy being petted - by polite children who know the rule about getting permission and know how to speak and act gently. Everyone - kids and grownups alike - needs to recognize that not all dogs are friendly. And, even friendly dogs can become aggressive and dangerous if they are frightened or over-stimulated.

These rules are just as important for your children to follow with your family pet and the neighbors' dogs. They need to know that just because a dog is familiar or a member of the family, there is no excuse for rude, thoughtless behavior. Most dog bites come from dogs the children know. Children who are confidently cautious and respect a dog's need for safety and space are much safer than children who have been taught to be fearful. Help keep your children safe by teaching them these seven important rules about dogs.

~~ by Carole Schatz ~~

Dog Behaviorist

Taken from the Life4Paws website, Los Angeles, CA

