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## REDUCING THE RISK OF DOG BITES

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While most dog owners will tell you that their pet is a beloved member of the family and would never bite, statistics unfortunately show otherwise. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there are over 4.7 million dog bites each year. These bites are very costly and affect everyone involved, including the victim, the dog owner and the insurer. The rate of dog bite-related injuries is highest for children ages 5 to 9 years old.

We would like to provide you with the following tips to help you reduce the chances of ever dealing with a dog bite. Please keep in mind that a normally docile dog will bite when protecting its young, its owner or its food.

- Have the animal spayed or neutered. It has been shown that these dogs are less aggressive and have a lower incidence of bites.
- Socialize your dog. Introduce it to your friends, family and neighbors, as well as to other animals, so that it knows how to behave.
- Play non-aggressive games with your pet. Teach it to play fetch, roll over or shake hands as opposed to tug-o-war.
- Discourage children from disturbing any dog that is eating or sleeping. Teach kids that they should never go near a strange animal unless accompanied by a responsible adult.
- Avoid exposing your dog to unfamiliar or stressful situations that may cause him to become defensive and aggressive.
- Consider enrolling your dog in obedience classes.
- Obey local leash laws and keep your dog confined even if there are no laws in your community.
- If you are concerned about your dogs running room, fence in an area of the yard or build a dog run.
- Never approach a strange dog. Avoid eye contact with a dog that appears aggressive or is acting in a threatening manner.

