

National Dog Bite Prevention Week May 18th – May 24th, 2008

Dog bite injuries are an important source of injury, especially among children. Nearly five million people are bitten by dogs every year in the United States, and there is a *300% higher medically attended bite rate in children relative to adults*. The rate of dog bite-related injuries is highest for children ages 5 to 9 years, and the majority of young children are bitten in the head and neck. There are more emergency room visits for dog bites than for skateboard, inline skating, baby walker, all-terrain vehicle and horseback riding accidents *combined*.

Despite these sobering statistics, few people are aware that dog bites are consistently one of the top ten causes of injury to children. Key experts believe that public education can help prevent these bites. May 18th – May 24th, 2008 is National Dog Bite Prevention Week. The American Veterinary Medical Association (www.avma.org), the American Academy of Pediatrics (www.aap.org), Prevent the Bite (www.preventthebite.org) and the United States Postal Service (www.usps.com) are working to educate Americans about dog bite prevention.

Safety Tips for Children

- **Remember:** Dogs tell us how they feel with their bodies. Learn the basics on canine body language. (www.preventthebite.org)
- **Remember:** NO owner, NO petting!
- **Always practice WAIT** when you want to pet a dog.
Wait to see if the dog is with his owner and looks friendly. *Ask* the owner for permission to pet their dog. *Invite* the dog to sniff you. Speak quietly, curl your hands at your sides and wait for the dog to come to you. *Touch* the dog gently to pet. Never pet near the face, head or tail.
- **Hugs** are for people, NOT for dogs.
- **NO** screaming or running around dogs.
- **NEVER** go near a dog that is sleeping, eating or feeling sick.
- **Don't** go near a dog that is in a car, behind a fence or tied up – even if you know him.
- **Good dog owners** take their dogs to the vet, train them and make sure they meet lots of different people.
- **Remember:** Dogs like to chase. If you're on your bike or your skateboard and a dog runs up to you, STOP and put the bike or skateboard between you and the dog.
- When a strange dog comes near you, **be BORING! Stand like a tree!** Silently cross your arms in front of your chest and look at the ground, NOT at the dog. If you are already on the ground or are knocked down, **lie like a rock!** Lie on your side, pull your knees to your chest, cup your hands over your ears and cover your face with your arms.

Safety tips for Parents

- **Before you adopt a dog**, make sure you select the proper breed for his environment. (www.avma.org/careforanimals/animatedjourneys/petsselection/consider.asp)
- **Neutered dogs** are far less likely to bite than sexually intact dogs.
- **Unchained dogs** are less likely to bite than chained dogs.
- **Female dogs** are less likely to bite than male dogs.