

ANIMAL HOSPITAL OF LANESVILLE

1849 Highway 11 Lanesville, IN 47136 (812) 952-3643

Children and Pets

By Dr. Rene Wingerter

Dog bites are responsible for the death of ten to fifteen children each year. Usually these are not stray dogs but the family's own beloved pet. Dog bite wounds are the number one reason for emergency hospital visits by children.

There are 5 rules to remember when dealing with pets and children.

1. Never leave an infant or small child alone with your pet. A crying child may upset the animal and provoke an attack. A toddler may fall on a sleeping dog or cat and hurt or frighten the animal enough to cause it to bite.
2. Never allow children to tease or harass any animal. Children can learn at a very early age to be gentle and affectionate to pets. A child that grabs or pokes even the most submissive pet is at risk of being bitten.
3. Never allow children to eat around animals or to play around a pet's food dish. Food and even toys can be too strong a temptation and can easily provoke an attack.
4. Introduce new pets to children very slowly. Teach both of them how to behave around each other. There should be certain rules for both of them. Puppies should never be allowed to jump on or nip children. Children should never yell and scream, grab, hit or kick pets. When either of them misbehaves they should be separated and made to endure 15 minutes of "quiet time" before resuming play.
5. Pets should never be allowed to roam the neighborhood freely. The risk of chasing or frightening children is too great. Having your pet spayed or neutered will also decrease the chance they will bite children since most attacks are by non-neutered male dogs.

Be responsible and teach your children to be responsible, too. If you have many cats and dogs, you and your children may begin to lose respect for the very special pets you have the privilege

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to own. Keep the numbers small and treat all animals with respect.

Teach children how to stand quietly and protect their head and neck if a strange or aggressive dog approaches them. Running from or fighting a dog only increases the severity of the injuries.

If you have any questions, please call the Animal Hospital of Lanesville at 952-3643. 🐾