



## Understanding Why Dogs Bite

1. One of the leading reasons dogs bite is because they feel threatened and want to protect themselves from harm. Examples include a dog who is hit to make him behave or a dog who is tied up outside and teased by children.  
**Bite Prevention Tip:** Do NOT threaten, hit, or tease dogs.
2. Dogs may bite because they are frightened.  
**Bite Prevention Tip:** Do NOT purposely scare dogs.
3. Dogs may bite when they get over-excited, even while playing.  
**Bite Prevention Tip:** Do NOT play rough with dogs. During regular play, watch a dog's body language. If the dog seems to be getting over-stimulated, give him or her a break.
4. Dogs may bite when protecting their territory or owner's property (yard, house, car, etc.)  
**Bite Prevention Tip:** NEVER approach an unknown dog off-leash.
5. Dogs may bite if handled when they are injured, are ill or are recovering from an operation.  
**Bite Prevention Tip:** Do NOT approach an injured dog. If your own dog is hurt or recovering from surgery, be very cautious near him or her. Ask an adult before you approach a recovering dog.
6. Dogs may bite if they have been bred to be aggressive or trained to be a guard dog.  
**Bite Prevention Tip:** NEVER approach an unknown dog off-leash. Always ask an owner's permission before approaching a pet dog; If the owner says "no" for any reason, leave the dog alone.
7. Some dogs may bite trying to protect their food, toys, favorite treats or a bone.  
**Bite Prevention Tip:** Do NOT take food, treats, or toys away from a dog. If a dog is playing with a toy, wait for him or her to drop the toy before reaching for it.
8. Dogs may bite if their 'chase instinct' is triggered by a jogger or bicyclist.  
**Bite Prevention Tip:** Do NOT try to 'race' the dog, thinking you can go faster (you probably won't win!) Instead, stop your activity, and practice stray dog safety tips: Stand like a tree, avoid eye contact, slowly back away from the dog. If biking, get off the bike and put it *between* you and the dog for an added level of safety.  
Chances are, once the dog does not have the motivation to chase, it will lose interest in you all together.
9. A dog may bite if startled or woken from sleep.  
**Bite Prevention Tip:** Avoid touching, or otherwise disturbing, a sleeping dog.
10. A mother dog may bite if she feels the need to protect her new puppies.  
**Bite Prevention Tip:** Do NOT touch a mom dog who is nursing puppies. Always ask an adult for permission and assistance.