

# ANIMAL BITES

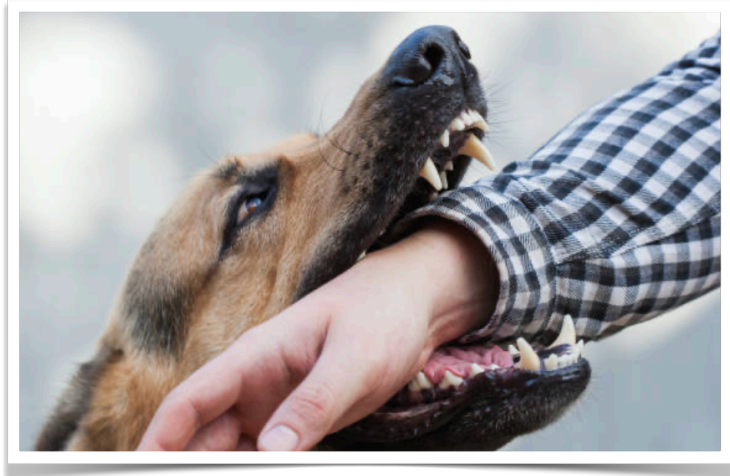
*Be kind to every kind, not just mankind*

## Basics

- Bite wounds from cats and dogs occur usually with provocation, more commonly in older animals or if an animal is disturbed while eating
- Bacterial infection is a significant concern in all bite wounds
- Infection is highest for cat bites, followed by human bites and dog bites
- Dog bites typically cause crushing wounds because of their rounded teeth and strong jaws. Cat bites usually cause puncture wounds and lacerations due to their sharp, pointed teeth

## Clinical presentation

- The appearance is variable (e.g., puncture, tear)
- Local wound infection (swelling, redness, warmth, pus), fever. Complications may include tendinitis, sepsis, cosmetic deformity, loss of limb.



## Prevention strategies

- Rinse bite wound with soap & running water for  $\geq 20$  min.
- Note the day, time, and location of the event, the type of animal, its health and behavior, and circumstances (provoked vs. non-provoked)
- Seek medical help if a wound is deep or contaminated with dirt or foreign materials. Debridement and antibiotics may be needed after some bites to prevent systemic infections, especially in people with compromised immune systems.
- Do not leave young children alone with an animal. Never approach, lean over, or try to pet an unfamiliar or sleeping animal. Avoid quick or sudden movements that may startle an animal. Never step between two fighting dogs. Know the warning signs of an impending bite.