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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Keep Children and Pets Safe by Teaching Any Dog May Bite**

*May 19-25 is Dog Bite Prevention Week*

**Topeka** — Each year, 4.5 million people in this country are bitten by dogs and 885,000 of those require medical attention, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Among children, the rate of dog bite–related injuries is highest for those ages 5 to 9 years, and children are more likely than adults to receive medical attention for dog bites than adults. Children, because of their inexperience and size, are particularly prone to serious injury from animal attacks. Dogs are also more prone to biting children more so than adults because they sense that they are being challenged when a child approaches at eye-to-eye level. Parents can help prevent serious injuries by teaching their children some simple rules about dog bite prevention. While certain dogs are more commonly associated with dog bites, it is important to remember that ANY dog may bite. Large, small, cute, ugly; they can all inflict serious bite wounds.

### **Parents should teach their children:**

- Don't pet any dogs without the owner's permission.
- Don't pet a dog—even your own—without letting him see and sniff you first. Do not surprise a dog by sneaking up on it.
- Never approach a strange dog, especially if it is restrained or chained up. Always assume that a dog that doesn't know you may see you as an intruder or a threat.
- Avoid running past a dog while playing. A dog's natural instinct will be to chase and catch you.
- Remain calm if ever confronted by a strange dog; don't stare into the dog's eyes and don't run away or scream. Teach your child not to run, but to stand very still. If the child is knocked to the ground or falls, they should curl into a ball while using their hands and arms to protect their face and neck.
- Never disturb a dog that is eating, sleeping, or caring for puppies.
- Avoid rough play with dogs. Never tease or harass a pet.

Also, report unlicensed/stray dogs or dogs displaying unusual behavior. Enforcement of leash laws is essential in reducing dog bite incidences.

### **If you are bitten:**

- Seek medical attention. The saliva of dogs has bacteria in high concentrations. All wounds from pet bites should be treated with antibiotics as soon as possible after the injury has occurred.
- Report it to animal control.

For more information or printable educational materials, visit <http://onehealthkansas.k-state.edu> and search for "Dog Bites" under the K-12 Education and Public Outreach Resources section.



safekidskansas.org

Safe Kids Kansas, Inc. is a nonprofit Coalition of over 70 statewide organizations and businesses dedicated to preventing accidental injuries to Kansas children ages 0-14. Local coalitions and chapters cover Allen, Butler, Cowley, Dickinson, Doniphan, Douglas, Elk, Ellis, Finney, Geary, Harvey, Johnson, Kiowa, Labette, Marion, Marshall, McPherson, Meade, Mitchell, Montgomery, Pottawatomie, Riley, Saline, Sedgwick, Shawnee, Smith, and Sumner counties, as well as the city of Emporia and the Metro Kansas City Area (Wyandotte county and several Missouri counties.) Safe Kids Kansas is a member of Safe Kids Worldwide, a global network of organizations whose mission is to prevent accidental childhood injury. The lead agency for Safe Kids Kansas is the Kansas Department of Health and Environment.

This information can be made available in alternative accessible formats upon request. For more information about obtaining an alternative format, you may contact Safe Kids Kansas at 785-296-1223, or [csage@kdheks.gov](mailto:csage@kdheks.gov). Both speech/hearing disabled and hearing Kansans can access the Kansas Relay Center by calling toll-free 1-800-766-3777. Callers should inform the relay operator of the number they wish to call and the type of call they are making direct, credit card, collect, person-to-person, etc.

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