



## I OR MY CHILD WAS BITTEN – WHAT DO I DO?

1. Obtain immediate **medical attention**; ensure that other people do not remain in danger from the same dog while you attend to the injured person.
2. Ensure that **your child** is assessed for emotional stress and obtains a referral for counselling if this is required. Talk to your child and monitor their behavior even long past the incident. For more information on how to help your child emotionally and to read answers to frequently asked questions from child psychiatrist Dr. R. Larry Schmitt, please visit [doggonesafe.com](http://doggonesafe.com) and view the Resources.
3. Instruct other children and bystanders to **Be a Tree** and remain still and quiet if the dog is still in the area.
4. Animal bites can easily become infected so a **visit to the doctor** is essential if the skin was broken.
5. Report the bite to your **local health department**. It is essential to find out whether the dog has had its vaccinations. Do not take the owner's word for this and do not worry about the dog owner "getting in trouble." Your or your child's health is more important than your relationship with the dog owner.
6. Report the bite to your **local animal services or animal control** officer - even if there was no serious injury. If you do not know who this is, call your local town hall to find out who is responsible for animal control and public safety in your area. It is important that a record be established for the dog so that if it has bitten before, or does so again, there is basis for taking further action.
7. Report the bite to **police** - they will be able to tell you whether the situation warrants a police investigation.
8. If you feel that other children remain in danger because of the dog and **lack of supervision**, report this to your local children's services agency so that they can investigate and take action if required.
9. Obtain a professional opinion about the need for **trauma counseling** if you or your child seems fearful, acts differently from normal, suffers from nightmares or otherwise seems upset or disturbed in the days or weeks following the incident. [Find out more about trauma counseling](#) and learn [what to look for in a counselor](#). In the US follow links from the [Mental Health Association's](#) site to local state organizations that may provide lists of counselors in your area.

10. If **your dog** was the biter, confine the dog and report the incident to your local animal control and health department. If your dog is euthanized as a result of the bite and you need assistance dealing with the loss of your pet, you can find help through the [Association for Pet Loss and Bereavement](#).
11. If you feel that you need information about **legal issues** related to the bite incident, to find a lawyer in your area do a Google search for "dog bite lawyer" and the name of your town or state/province. Here are some resources that we have found that may be useful. Some of these are paid directories and so may not list all the lawyers in your area:
  - In the US: for listings of dog bite lawyers in the US visit the [Personal Injury Lawyer Directory](#).
  - In the US and Canada, you can search the [Attorney Locate Directory](#) or the [Martindale Directory](#).
  - In the US, you can find all the dog-related laws for every state here: <http://www.animallaw.info/articles/arpusstatedoglaws.htm>
  - In Ontario, the Law Society of Upper Canada provides a free legal service called the "[Lawyer Referral Service](#)" - contact them and they'll refer you to a litigation lawyer for a consultation. In order to make the most benefit of your time, make a list of the key points you want to mention such as what happened, when it happened, what the long-term effects on your health are, what legal action has taken place and the dates. Write down the specific questions you want to ask, in order of importance.
  - In the UK you can search the directory of the [Association of Personal Injury Lawyers](#).
12. In serious cases you may be able to obtain **victim's assistance** from the National Organization for Victim's Assistance ([NOVA](#)) in the US.

---

## SOME SUGGESTIONS FROM OTHER VICTIMS...

1. Take photos of the victim, the dog, the scene and anything else that may be important later. Have a friend go back to the scene and take photos if you are unable to do so.
2. Obtain the services of an attorney to help you negotiate with your insurance company.
3. If you struggle with ongoing anger long after the attack, consider reading the book, "**Forgiveness is a Choice: A step-by-step process for resolving anger and restoring hope**" by Robert D. Enright

---

Locate a pet training or behavior professional "Informed by Science, Guided by Empathy and Governed by Ethics" at [www.petprofessionalguild.com](http://www.petprofessionalguild.com).