

## Biting

Biting by children is common between the ages of 12 and 36 months. This happens when children haven't learned to tell you what they want. After teeth come in, children like to use them by biting. They learn that biting usually gets attention. What begins as normal fun becomes a way to tell people what they do or don't like.

Biting is often a response to stress, such as having to share or wait one's turn. Often the stressful situation can be avoided before biting happens. But in any case, biting is not allowed — because it hurts!

### How to handle biting:

1. Make a rule.
  - "No biting."
  - "Biting is not allowed."
  - "We never bite. It hurts."
2. Give your child something to carry around and bite on, if necessary, like a soft toy.
  - "It's okay to bite your teddy bear — not people."
3. If your child bites, restate the rule, then place him in "time-out."
  - "No biting. You're going to time-out."
4. Understand biting (in a child younger than 2 - 3 years) is usually a reaction to stress. Find the source of the stress, if you can.
5. Know what situations cause your child to bite. Try to avoid these times. Help your child find things that are less frustrating to him.
6. Don't bite back! Don't slap faces!
7. Laughing at your child when he bites will only make him want to do it again.
  - "This is not funny. It hurts!"
8. Praise your child for not biting.
9. Encourage your child to use his words and tell you why he is biting, if he is old enough to talk about it. Use words like "I know you are upset. Biting is not allowed."

### Call your doctor if your child:

- Continues to bite after you have tried these ideas.
- Is biting and hurting himself or others.
- Bites and breaks skin to cause bleeding.
- Continues to bite and you feel you can not control your anger about it.