Animal Bites

Animals are fun and interesting to children. Teaching children how to act around animals is very important. Animal bites can be easily prevented.

Prevention:

- Supervise your children around animals at all times.
- Teach your child not to tease animals, even pets. Animals should always be respected.
- Never approach wild or strange animals.
- Stay away from animals that act sick.
- Never put your face near an animal you do not know or that does not know you!
- Do not stare directly at animals. Back away slowly if you feel that they may attack.

Signs that an animal might be ready to attack are:

- Showing its teeth
- Hair standing up on its back
- Staring back at you

If an animal does attack:

1. Make fists.
2. Roll your body into a ball.
3. Protect your face, head and neck.
4. Contact Animal Control to capture the animal.
5. This animal should be watched in an area away from other people and other animals for 10 days.

Take your child to the doctor or emergency room immediately if:

- The bite area (wound) continues to bleed after holding pressure on it for 10 minutes. The wound may need stitches.
- The bite is from a bat, wild animal, or animal that acts sick.
- The scratches or bites are from a cat.
- It has been 5 years or more since your child’s last tetanus booster or vaccination.
- There are any signs of infection (increased redness, swelling, pain, fever, pus, or red streaks around the bite area).
Wound Care:

1. Wash all wounds with soap and water for 10 minutes.

2. Apply an antibiotic ointment such as Bacitracin® or Polysporin® to the wound.

3. Cover with a clean bandage. Change bandage at least twice a day for 3 days or as directed by the doctor.

4. If prescribed, take an oral antibiotic as directed.

5. You may give your child acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (Children's Advil®, Motrin®) for pain as directed by your child’s doctor. Be sure to follow the package directions for the amount to give based on your child’s age and weight. Do not give more than 5 doses of acetaminophen or 4 doses of ibuprofen in 24 hours.

6. If your child has stitches, see "Cuts and Scrapes" CARE CARD.

Other Helpful Information

- Be sure to call Animal Control about all wild animal bites or any animals in your area that act strange or sick.

- If your child is treated for an animal bite at the hospital, it is reported to the Health Department. You may receive a call from the Health Department about the animal and/or bite.

- **Call your child’s doctor or the Children’s Mercy Hospital Information Line at (816) 234-3188 if you have any questions or concerns about animal bites.**

Animal Control Phone Numbers:

- Kansas City, Missouri: (816) 513-9800
- Overland Park, Kansas: (913) 895-6300