

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH



COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

“May 20th - 26th is National Dog Bite Prevention Week!”

The San Bernardino County Animal Care & Control Program (ACC) along with the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) would like to remind everyone that May 20-26, 2008 is National Dog Bite Prevention Week. Each year about 4.7 million people in the US are bitten by dogs. Approximately 80% of those bites are by dogs we know and interact with on a regular basis. More than half of those victims are under the age of 13. Children are also at least three times more likely than adults to sustain a serious injury.

The following simple tips are for children and adults to take when interacting with dogs:

- Before petting a dog, always ask the dog’s owner for permission.
- Never pet a dog that is eating, sleeping, or playing with a toy.
- Understand a dog’s body language. For example, ears, tails, and fur standing straight up are some signs that a dog is angry and you should stay away from it!
- When you pet a dog, approach slowly and speak softly. Avoid direct eye contact with a dog. Let the dog sniff the back of your hand. Pet the dog on the back, not the head.
- If a dog growls at you or starts to chase you, stay still. Do not run or scream. A dog is more likely to sniff you and go away if you stay still and quiet.
- If a dog knocks you down to the ground, roll into a ball and stay still and quiet.

To help educate the public about dog bites the AVMA has developed a brochure, “What you should know about dog bite prevention”, offering tips on how to avoid being bitten. The brochure can be accessed by visiting the AVMA website at www.avma.org. For more information about preventing dog bites in San Bernardino County, residents can call the San Bernardino County Animal Care and Control Program at 1-800-472-5609.

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