

BITE LEVELS

By Dr. Ian Dunbar with human equivalent Interpretations by Cheryl Smith.

Compiled by Lyn Morningstar for Lee County Domestic Animal Services.

ASSESSMENT OF BITE SEVERITY BASED ON SEVERITY OF WOUND.

- Level 1 Bite & Miss - Aggressive behavior but no skin contact by teeth. Intentional warning by an unrestrained dog. "Air - Snap".
Human equivalent:
"Leave me alone." and slams the door in someone's face.
- Level 2 Single Bite/Skin Contact - Bruise or scrape results, but no vertical skin puncture. Skin nicks may be 1/10" deep with slight bleeding from lateral scrapes by teeth. Intentional contact. Enough pressure to give emphasis, but exhibiting considerable bite inhibition.
Human equivalent:
"Leave Me Alone!" and pushes someone away. Person might fall down.
- Level 3 Single bite with 1-4 punctures - No puncture deeper than 1/2 the length of the dog's canine teeth. Possible lateral tear from victim pulling away, or dog being pulled away, or gravity - a little dog jumps up, bites and drops back to floor. Intentional contact with severe pressure and no bite inhibition.
Human equivalent:
"Leave Me Alone!!" and punches someone in the face. May cause injury.
- Level 4 Single bite with 1-4 punctures - Often holding on and shaking head. At least one puncture deeper than 1/2 the length of the dog's canine teeth. May also have deep bruising around wound (dog held on and bore down) or laceration in both directions from dog shaking his head. Intentional contact with excessive pressure. No bite inhibition.
Human equivalent:
"LEAVE ME ALONE!" and uses a weapon. Causes serious injury.
- Level 5 Multiple bites with at least two level 4 bites - Many bites, jaw doesn't leave victim, can't count number of bites. Causes severe mutilation. Intentional contact with excessive pressure and force. No bite inhibition.
Human equivalent:
"LEAVE ME ALONE!!" and uses a weapon.
Causes serious injury that may be life - threatening.
- Level 6 Level 5 bite(s) that cause death - Intentional Contact. Excessive Pressure. No bite inhibition.
Human equivalent:
"LEAVE ME ALONE!!" and uses a weapon causing death.
- Summary: Levels 1 and 2 comprise well over 99% of dog - bite incidents.
Each year in the United States, approximately 20 people are killed by dogs, one half (10) of them are children. However, each year in the United States, approximately 2000 children are killed - by their parents!