



PRESS RELEASE

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National Dog Bite Prevention Week May 17th to May 23rd 2009. 4.8 million Americans are Bitten Each Year

Each year, a week in May is nominated as 'National Dog Bite Prevention Week' sponsored by the American Veterinary Medical Association, United States Postal Service and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. This year the week chosen is May 17th to May 23, 2009.

According to a 2007-2008 survey by American Pet Products Manufacturers Association (APPMA) there are approximately 74 million dogs owned in the United States. This is a lot of dogs so it is not surprising that around 4.8 million Americans receive dog bites each year and around 800,000 of those bites require medical attention though many need just a band aid.

The DogSmith, America's Dog Training, Dog Walking and Pet Care Franchise explains that most dog bites occur within the dog's home territory and bite victims are normally family members, home service workers, and delivery persons. Last year over 30,000 mail carriers alone were bitten while doing their jobs. Most surprising is that half of the bite incidents reported involved children bitten by the family pet. Most of these unfortunate incidents can be avoided if we all take the responsibility of protecting our family members and visitors through an effective education process and the correct training and socializing of our four legged

family members.

The DogSmith is committed to animal safety training as it also protects the family pet and ensures they stay successfully in their home. Many dogs surrendered to shelters and animal rescue groups are labeled aggressive because they have displayed, snarling, snapping or growling behavior toward their owner. In many instances owners of “aggressive dogs” tell us that their dog tried to bite and missed. In fact, explained Tudge, The DogSmith founder, “when a dog snaps, its intention is to warn and not to make contact. A dog’s reflexes are so much faster than ours that if a dog intends to make contact with you they normally will. Dogs that bite without damage are showing huge restraint and deserve the time invested to teach them some appropriate social skills. Dog’s teeth can be a dangerous weapon and when dogs are scared or threatened and bite without damage they have shown they are worthy and deserving to be in our homes.”

There are many organizations that provide information on educating your children and family members on animal handling and behavior. The Humane Society of The United States has a list of recommendations when it comes to educating children about dog handling. The Center for Disease Control is also committed to reducing the risk to public health caused by dog bites by working with state health departments to establish dog bite prevention programs and by tracking and reporting dog bite injury trends in the U.S. Dog bites are largely preventable and adults and children can learn to reduce their chances of being bitten if they educate themselves.

The DogSmith recommends:

- Before petting someone's dog, ask the owner’s permission. If it's okay, approach slowly and quietly. Let the dog sniff you first, then pet the dog's sides or back gently.
- Never sneak up on or pet a dog that is eating or sleeping. Animals may bite when they are startled or frightened.
- Never pet a dog that is playing with a toy. Dogs are often protective of toys, and may think a child is trying to take it.
- Never try to pet a dog that is in a car. Dogs will often protect that space.
- Never pet a dog that is behind a fence. Most dogs naturally protect their property and home.

And if a strange dog approaches, children should follow these tips:

- If you are walking, stop and stand still (like a tree) with your hands at your side.
- If you are playing on the ground, lie still on the ground (like a log) with your knees tucked into your stomach and your hands over your ears. When you stay still and quiet like this, the dog will most likely just sniff you and go away.
- Never, ever try to outrun a dog. Back away slowly from him instead.

- Stare at the ground, not at the dog
- Hum a nursery rhyme, it keeps you calm
- With all of this - if a dog does attack then take off your jacket or coat and wave it, the dog will take hold of that and not you. This may give you time to retreat over a fence, inside a gate or get help.

On a closing note Tudge advises, “The important thing to remember, as a Pet Dog Owner, is that if you see any behavior from your dog, such as staring, growling, snapping or biting, contact a professional dog trainer who will be able to help you understand what your pet is trying to tell you and help you create a plan to modify the unacceptable behavior. If the behavior is left untreated it can become progressively worse. Don’t wait until your dog is biting and becomes a social liability before you call in the experts. Let’s keep all our family members safe, including our four legged ones, and let’s keep dog bites in perspective, Janice Bradley in her book *Dogs Bite but balloons and slippers are more dangerous* writes that cars, ladders, poison, choking, fires, guns and bicycles are all responsible for more unintentional deaths than dog bites.

About The DogSmith

The DogSmith was formed in 2007 by Niki Tudge, a Dog Trainer and Animal Behaviorist. The DogSmith became America's Dog Training, Dog Walking and Pet Care Franchise in 2008. The DogSmith exists to enhance the lives of pets and their owners by improving their relationship and the quality of the life they share, through; providing professional support and training to pet dog owners, supporting and assisting humane societies, animal shelters and rescue organizations to minimize the number of unwanted animals and by offering affordable and professional care to family pets so that pet ownership is never a burden. www.888DogSmith.com 1-888-Dog-Smith