

Bites and other injuries from kuri (dogs)



Care (taha tinana) after a dog bite

- **Dressing changes** - Dressings should be changed daily, or more often if wet or dirty. This can be done by the practice nurse or a visiting home care nurse. For simple injuries you or your whānau may be able to do this.
- **Steri-strips** - Any paper stitches on the wound should be left in place for as long as they remain attached (ideally 2 weeks).
- **Removal of sutures** - These should be removed by your practice nurse. For face wounds this is normally in 5-7 days and for limb and body wounds 10-14 days. Dissolving sutures may be used for young children.
- **Infection** - Dog bites are a higher risk of infection than many other injuries. Antibiotics may be given if:
 - The wound has not been cleaned straight away
 - The wound is on body areas at higher risk of infection
 - The child/young person is at higher risk of infection

With low-risk injuries antibiotics may not be needed but should be started early if there are any signs of infection, including:

- Redness around the wound
- Fluid or pus leaking from the wound
- Wound swelling
- Fever

See your family doctor if you notice any of the changes above, or if your child becomes unwell.

- **Tetanus immunisation** - Will be given if your child is not already up to date.
- **Rabies** - Post-exposure prophylaxis can be provided if your child was bitten overseas.

Manaakitanga

It is common for people to have an emotional reaction after what can be a traumatic event. Some people may find it useful to get support with taha hinengaro (emotional wellbeing), taha wairua (spiritual wellbeing), or taha whānau (whānau wellbeing). Options for support include victim support 0800 VICTIM, counselling, or a Rongoā practitioner through your family Doctor or ACC.

Prevention of further injury: Ko te tohu o te rangatira he manaaki

Dog bites and other non-bite injuries are preventable injuries that are becoming more common. Children are affected more than adults, and their injuries can be more serious, often to the head and neck area.

When a dog bites, it is more likely that it will bite again in the future, and could cause further serious injury. The care and protection of our mokopuna (children) and communities is best done through kotahitanga (collective responsibility). Health professionals are strongly encouraged to notify animal management services of all dog bites and other serious dog-related injuries. Animal Management Officers can then assess the events, provide follow up, and reduce the chance of future injuries. This helps to keep our communities safe, especially for children in the area.

An Animal Management Officer will contact you within the next 24-48hrs. Follow-up may include education on how to prevent further injuries or restrictions on the dog or owner. For more serious cases, this may include infringements, prosecution, or destruction of the dog.