

# IS YOUR DOG SAFE WITH PEOPLE

The benefits of owning pets are well documented and dogs are the favoured pet in the Northern Territory.

However there are many instances of dogs turning on their owners, family member or friends.



In nearly every instance, the dog owner will say that the dog has “**never shown signs of aggression before.**”

Unfortunately, that first time may result in serious injury, permanent scarring, often to a child, and an ongoing fear of dogs.

What can you do to prevent your dog from attacking another person, even your own children?

This fact sheet is a guide and not a guarantee that your dog won't attack but may assist in attack prevention.

## **Avoiding Dog Attacks**

**Remember, All dogs can and may bite !**

## **RECOGNISING DANGER ZONES**

There are certain times and places where a dog is more likely to be aggressive, By being aware of these danger zones, you may avoid being bitten, or if you are a dog owner, you may be able to prevent your dog from biting someone else.

**If you have a dog that is aggressive, you should seek professional advice before someone is injured**

## **DANGER ZONES INCLUDE**

On the dog's owners property. The dog may react aggressively to people it considers intruders.

Close by the owner's property. The dog may not recognize the boundary fence or the footpath as being the limit of his territory.

In the car, on the back of a utility truck. The dog may consider the vehicle to be part of its territory and bite anyone who comes near.

If the dog is sitting in the car, don't leave the window down far enough for the dog to lunge out and bite. (Remember on hot days do not leave dogs in cars.)

At a local park or street where the dog regularly walks and urinates to mark the area as his territory.

When being walked on a leash, some dogs may be protective of their owners and become aggressive towards people or dogs walking by.

When a dog is near its owner or the owner's children.

If someone touches the owner, the dog may think that person is threatening the owner and bite.

When the dog is grabbed or pulled by the collar.

When the dog is nervous, or feels cornered and can't run away.

When the dog has a bone or toy, or is near its food or bed.

## **SUPERVISING DOGS WITH CHILDREN**

**Dogs and small children should never be left together unsupervised.**

No matter how good natured the dog is, a dangerous situation could develop if the dog is hurt, frightened, cornered or feels threatened.

**Children must not hug and kiss dogs. Many bites on children's faces result from the child trying to hug a dog.**

Children must be taught to handle animals gently and carefully.

**Adults supervising dogs with children should be aware of potentially dangerous situations:-**

When there is food around.

When the dog is nervous or exited.

When the dog is unwell or in pain.

When the dog has a litter of pups

When two dogs are playing or fighting together.

When visiting children are with the dog.

When children play in or near the dog's bed.

Your dog may need to be trained to wear a muzzle for safety if you are at all uncertain about how the dog will react to children.

**Remember. Dogs and children should be supervised or separated.**

**Remember to praise and reward your dog for good behavior. Obedience training will help you to control your dog's behavior**

## **RECOGNISING THE EARLY SIGNS OF AGGRESSION**

Does your dog ever tense up, stare, raise its hackles, growl, lift its lips or snap when:-

Eating or when food is around?

Its ears, paws, tail or belly are touched?

Someone goes near its bed or toys?

Someone tries to move the dog from a comfortable spot?

It is told off?

Someone grabs the dog, or tries to pick it up, or pulls on its collar?

It is approached by people, children or other dogs?

Does your dog lunge out at people or dogs when out walking, or rush out barking and growling at passers-by?

**If the answer is yes to any of these situations, then your dog may be aggressive.**

These are the early warning signs. You need to seek professional advice, as your dog's behavior is likely to get worse, not better, with time.

Don't wait until someone has been seriously bitten. The sooner you seek help, the more easily the problem can be solved.

Does your dog get very nervous, cower or try to run away from children, adults or other dogs?

If "yes" then your dog could be dangerous if it ever feels threatened or cornered, and may attack out of fear. You need to seek professional advice to help your dog overcome its fear.

If you are concerned about your dog's behavior, please consult your veterinarian, who may be able to help you, or refer you to an animal behaviourist

**For further information contact:  
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