

What to Do If You Are Bitten By A Dog

By Douglas D. Brannon, Esq., [Brannon & Associates](#)

Every year thousands of Americans unexpectedly become victims of an animal attack or dog bite through no fault of their own. Although animal attacks mostly involve dog bites, many other types of domesticated and non-domesticated animals such as cats, exotic pets, birds and farm animals also bite humans. Innocent children are particularly susceptible to bites since they do not recognize the potential danger that some animals pose. The purpose of this article is to educate people on what a victim should do after the bite.

Once the bite victim is separated from the animal, there are several things that should be done immediately. First and foremost, you should try and identify the dog that attacked by remembering the size, color, breed or any other unique characteristics about the animal. This will help animal control officers so that they can look for the dog and hopefully capture it. If the dog can be identified it will aid in determining if the animal was diseased and who the owner is. This can avoid having to undergo treatment for rabies which can be painful.

Seeking immediate medical attention is necessary whether the wound is serious or just appears to be a minor puncture of the skin. This is because bite wounds are susceptible to infection from bacteria and other diseases that animals carry. Treatment should be sought in an emergency room or urgent care facility if the wound is minor. The physician should do a thorough examination of the bite area and determine an appropriate course of treatment. Be sure that you follow the instructions from the doctor, including but not limited, to follow-up care and medication. It may even be necessary to consult with a plastic surgeon to address any scarring, especially if the bite occurred in the facial or other visible area of the body.

The dog bite should be reported to animal control and the police department. These agencies will help identify who the owner is and whether the dog is “up to date” on his shots. If the dog owner can be identified, make sure you get the person’s name, address, phone number, vaccination record of the animal and the name of their insurance company. Try and get the names of any witnesses to the attack and their contact information as well. Good pictures of the bite wound should also be taken as soon as possible to document the injury. All of these items will be helpful if a claim is pursued for personal injuries in a court of law.

It is likely that a dog owner has homeowner’s or renter’s insurance that covers dog bites. This can help compensate a bite victim for personal injuries, pain and suffering, medical bills, lost income and even pay for cosmetic surgery in the future. If you hear from the insurance company write down the name of the company, claim number and contact information of the person who called. However, you should not give any statements, sign medical releases, allow yourself to be tape-recorded, discuss your injury or even discuss money with the insurance company. Instead, just get their information and bring it, along with your other information about the case, to a qualified dog bite injury lawyer.

If you are considering filing a personal injury action do not wait to get an experienced [dog bite lawyer](#). A good attorney will work quickly to gather the necessary evidence and protect your legal rights. You may also have a limited amount of time to file a dog bite lawsuit before the

statute of limitations expires making time of the essence. In Ohio, there is a strict liability dog bite statute that states that the owner of a dog is liable for damages if his dog bites a person who is either in a public place or lawfully in a private place (including the property of the owner of the dog). A dog bite victim is entitled to compensation for physical, economic and emotional injuries even if the dog has never bitten anyone before and the dog owner had no idea that his dog would bite another individual. A lawyer can help you determine whether to pursue your case and help get you the best possible outcome.

About the Author

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