

## CHILDHOOD INJURIES

Dog bites are very serious and most can be avoided with proper supervision and management. Being around a dog is nowhere near the most dangerous aspect of your children's lives.

- Every year, 4.7 million people are bitten by a dog.
- 60% of these bites are to children 12 and under
- Boys receive twice as many bites as girls.
- Boys between 5 and 9 are in the highest risk group
- 61% of dog bites happen in familiar settings—at home or a friend or relative's house
- 800,000 people (both children and adults) seek medical attention each year for dog-bite injuries.
- Each year approximately 10-20 people die from dog bites; the majority are children.

Scary stuff, huh? Here's how dog bites compare to other dangers our children face:

- Approximately 3.5 million children 14 and under get hurt each year playing sports
- Sports-related injuries result in more than 775,000 children being treated in hospital emergency rooms each year
- Sports and other recreational activities account for 21% of traumatic brain injuries in U.S. kids
- Children between 5 and 14 account for 40% of all sports-related injuries.
- Every year, 900,000 to 1 million U.S. children experience nonfatal child maltreatment.
- Homicide is the fourth leading cause of death for U.S. children between 1 and 9 years of age and the fifth leading cause of death for kids between 10 and 14
- In 2003, motor vehicle crashes resulted in an average of 4 deaths and 602 injuries *each day* (NHTSA 2004a).
- In 2002, 130 children between 1-14 died from bike accidents, 419 died from firearms, 904 died from drowning, and 1,214 died from suffocation

We need to be concerned about safety in all environments and take steps to keep our children safe from the many dangers they face. (Statistics from Centers for Disease Control ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)) and 1998 National SAFE KIDS Campaign.)

**Colleen Pelar, CPDT, is the author of *Living with Kids and Dogs . . . Without Losing Your Mind*. For additional information about safe interactions between kids and dogs, please visit [www.LIVINGwithKIDSandDOGS.com](http://www.LIVINGwithKIDSandDOGS.com).**