Prevent dog bites, before they have a chance to happen.

When you’re thinking of getting a dog:
• Consider what kind of dog (age, sex, breed) will fit your lifestyle.
• Consult a veterinarian or other animal professional for advice on the kind of dog for your family.
• Spend time with a dog before buying or adopting it.

Once you own a dog:
• Ask your veterinarian for tips on socializing and training your dog.
• Teach your dog obedient behavior.
• Never leave infants or young children alone with a dog.
• Spay or neuter your dog. Dogs that have been spayed or neutered are less likely to be aggressive.
• Immediately seek professional advice if your dog develops aggressive or undesirable behaviors.

Children should stay away from dogs that are:
• Not accompanied by an adult.
• Appear to be sad, mad or just unfriendly.
• Behind a fence or in a car.
• Eating, sleeping, or chewing on a bone or toy.
• Injured or nursing pups.
• Working, such as a police dog or “seeing-eye” dog.

Children should never offer a dog food without the owner’s permission and presence.

Teach children to always ask permission before trying to pet a dog.
Once they have permission to pet a dog, teach them to:
1st Let the dog sniff their closed hand.

2nd Slowly and gently pet the side of the dog’s neck.
Do not pet a dog on the top of the head.

Children can get the most out of relationships with dogs by learning to understand, respect and love them.
Dog bites are more common in the absence of adults. To keep children safe, they should never be left alone with a dog, even the family pet. When an adult is present, many of the situations that lead to biting can be avoided.

How you can help prevent a dog bite:
Teach children that dogs communicate differently from humans, and dogs may misunderstand some of the actions of children.

A dog may become aggressive or feel threatened when a child:
• Runs away from the dog.
• Tries to hug the dog, especially around the neck.
• Stares at the dog.
• Plays rough or pretends to fight with the dog.
• Teases the dog.
• Yells or throws things at the dog.

Staying safe:
Teach children to use these two safety postures if they are approached by an unknown dog.

If an unknown dog approaches them while they are standing, they should:
Stand still like a tree!
• Stand straight, with their feet together.
• Make fists with their hands and place them under their chin.
• Do not stare at the dog.

If an unknown dog approaches them while they are on the ground, they should:
Act like a log!
• Lie face down, feet together.
• Make fists with their hands and place them behind their head.
• Cover their ears with their forearms.

Did you know?
• There are over 60 million dogs in U.S. households.
• Dogs bite over 4 million people each year. About 800,000 bites require medical attention.
• Most dogs that bite are males.
• Most bites occur in the warmer months, during late afternoon or early evening.
• About half of dog bite victims are less than 20 years old.
• Over 40,000 facial bite injuries occur annually. About 20,000 of those happen to children less than 10 years old.
• Between 15 and 20 people die each year as a result of dog bites.

Educating children, parents and dog owners is the best way to prevent dog bites.

Meet Rufus!
He and his loyal gang at the University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine teach kids about using good manners around dogs. For more information about the UTCVM Dog Bite Prevention Program visit:
www.vet.utk.edu/dogbiteprevention

Remind children that they should always tell an adult if they have any problem with a dog.