

Animal Bites

Domestic pets are the source of most non-insect animal bites. Dogs are more likely to bite than cats. However, cat bites are more likely to cause infection. Human bites are the most dangerous of mammalian bites.

Treatment:

Wash the bite area with soap and water. If the skin is torn or if bleeding persists, apply pressure to stop the bleeding, and seek medical help. Determine if the animal has a current rabies vaccination or, if a stray, try to contain animal until Robeson County Animal Control (910-671-3200) can capture and confine the animal for observation. If the animal is known to you and the biter has a current rabies vaccination AND the wound is minor, apply antibiotic ointment to the area, bandage and observe for signs of infection (redness, swelling, pain or pustular drainage). If the wound appears to be infected, seek medical attention.

A healthcare provider should evaluate all wounds with broken skin or if the rabies status of the biter is unknown or out of date. This should occur as soon as possible. Information that you should have when you meet with your health care provider includes: where/when the bite occurred; type of animal and whether a stray; whether the attack was unprovoked and description of the behavior of animal; date of your latest tetanus booster; and date of previous rabies vaccine.

Do not treat a human bite yourself. Clean and bandage and seek medical care as soon as possible. To make an appointment at Student Health Services, call 910-521-6219.

