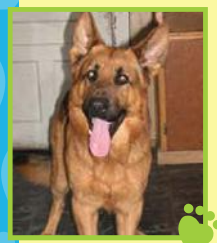
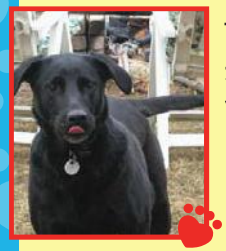
Dog Body Language Basics

Many bites can be prevented if people learn to read a dog's body language.

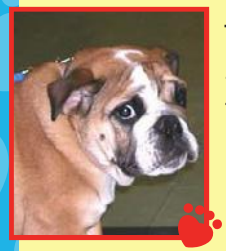


This dog's whole body is wagging calmly and he is panting. He is happy to see you.

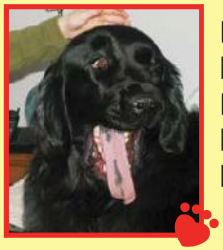
Her tail is high, her body is stiff and her mouth is closed. "I'm warning you. Back off!"



The tongue flick and the slow, stiff tail wag tell you this dog is very unsure. "Go away."



The half-moon eye and the closed mouth tell you this dog is uncomfortable. "Leave me alone!"



He is not yawning because he is tired. He is anxious and he hopes you will leave him alone.

A tail tucked in, even if wagging a bit, means a very worried dog. "Please stay away from me."

This dog is turning her head away in order to avoid conflict. She doesn't want to be bothered.

The "freeze and stare" is a very dangerous sign! This dog will bite if you persist.

Answers from the front: 1. I'm happy to see you. 2. I'm worried. 3. Leave me alone!

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For more information about dog bite prevention, visit **www.doggonesafe.com.** doggonesafe

Dog Safety Tips

The most important thing to know is how to **"Be a Tree."** Stand still and remain quiet if a dog approaches. This also works if your own dog gets too frisky. **Never run** from a dog.

- **Play safe games** with your dog like fetch or hide and seek. **Avoid rough games** like tug of war. Never let your dog chase or bite you "for fun."
- **Dogs don't like pats on the head.** You can safely pet dogs by scratching them on the side of the neck. **Be gentle.**
- **Stay away from strange dogs.** If you want to pet a dog you know, ask the owner. Look at the dog to see if he wants to meet you. If he doesn't want to meet you, that's okay; leave him alone.
- **Always leave dogs alone** when they are eating or chewing on a bone, if they are sick or injured, or if they are chained up in their yard.

Prevent Dog Bites

- **Socialize your dog.** As early as possible in your dog's life, provide opportunities to socialize and interact with other dogs and people of all ages.
- **Train your dog.** Take your dog to classes that focus on positive, reward-based training.
- **If you have serious concerns** about your dog's behavior, consult a professional dog trainer or dog behaviorist for help and advice.
- **Supervise all interactions between dogs and children.** The younger the child, the closer the supervision should be. Also ensure that there is adequate supervision when your child goes to visit a friend who has a dog.
- **Teach young children to go to an adult** if there is a problem with a dog. Discourage children from trying to discipline the dog.
- **Exercise your dog every day.** A dog that exercises regularly will be healthy and more likely to stay calm around people.
- **Keep your dog healthy.** Visit your vet at the first sign of illness or a sudden change in your dog's behavior.
- **Leash your dog.** It is the law. Using a leash is the only reliable way to control your dog in public.

Dogs Don't Bite "Out of the Blue."

Many bites can be avoided if people will read a dog's body language. Even good dogs bite. Use caution, especially around children, if you are unsure of your dog's response.

It may surprise you to know **dogs don't like hugs and kisses.** It is best to wait for them to come to you for attention.

This information is brought to you by:

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EMERGENCY NURSES ASSOCIATION
SAFE PRACTICE, SAFE CARE

The San Diego Chapter

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Who Let the Dogs Bite?

- Emergency Rooms across the nation see and treat about **1000 dog bites a day.**
- Most of these bites come from our own **family pets.**
- **Children are the most at risk for injury.**
- The most common bite areas are the **face, head, and neck.**

You can learn how to prevent dog bites with the simple tips in this brochure.

What is this dog saying?

Can you read his body language?

See the answers inside.