Shelter Sense Volume 14, Number 01
Dinner Time!

By Gary J. Patronek, VMD, Director of the Chester County SPCA (PA) and Addie Reddy, AHT, Kennel Manager of the Chester County SPCA

Feeding shelter animals is a seemingly simple task, but one that can't be treated lightly if animals are to be healthy. And feeding time can be quality time for the animals if staff make it so.

The companion animals staff of The HSUS receives numerous questions regarding feeding shelter animals, and this article will answer many of those questions.

What, When, and How Much To Feed?

When it comes to determining how much to feed animals, beware of general quantity guidelines. The amount needed can vary drastically with the animal’s age, health, and stress and exercise levels,
as well as the nutritional quality of the food being fed. It helps to use one kind of food (as long as it is good quality) so that staff can become accustomed to the amount of dogs of different sizes and conditions will need. Gaines, Purina, and Quaker Oats, among other name-brands, make good-quality pet foods.

A good way to handle feedings is for staff members to serve a portion of food to animals and then watch how they eat. If a dog still looks hungry after about four hours, the staff can give him or her a second helping. But be careful of hungry after about four hours, the staff can give him or her a second helping. But be careful of hungry when serve a portion of food again.

Oats, among other name-brands, make good-quality food. Eat all he or she wants is liable to cause diarrhea. Should your shelter get donated food, it is probably best to mix it in small amounts with your usual food to minimize the effects of the variation. Any money saved by using poor-quality or donated food may be outweighed by extra clean-up efforts, odor, and decreased adoptions.

Although feeding a premium food (such as Iams or Science Diet) is not critical an issue in healthy adult animals, it is still advisable to feed the best food you can afford. Avoid generic foods and commercial foods with red dyes that tend to mimic blood in the stool. The advantages will be less frequent stools, smaller stool volume, less odor, less clean-up time, and a better kennel operation.

Puppies over four months of age must be fed at least twice a day, and those between eight weeks and four months, three times. Adult dogs in good condition need only be fed once daily, but keep in mind that frequent changes in diet are stressful for animals and contribute to bloat in adult dogs. The stress of a shelters' environment, poor nutrition, parasites, and exposure to infectious diseases increase nutrient requirements even further. Since young animals have small stomachs and can’t eat very much at a time, it is crucial that there be multiple feedings and that the food have a high energy density. This is best accomplished with a good-quality commercial puppy or kitten food.

It is important to realize that there are great differences among foods in their nutritional value, and your puppy and kitten food budget is not the place to cut corners if you want to ensure that you have healthy animals for adoption. Feeding an inadequate diet, even over the animals’ brief stays at your shelter, can significantly affect the health and appearance of young animals. Young animals may not be accustomed to solid food, moistening the food with warm water and powdered milk may increase its palatability.

Distended abdomens and poor hair coats are common results of feeding poorly digestible foods with low caloric density to puppies and kittens. Puppies gorging to try to meet their caloric needs on such a diet may stretch the supporting ligaments of their stomachs—a condition that may contribute to bloat in adult dogs.

Feline Nutrition: A Cat is Not a Dog
Cats’ nutritional requirements are very different from dogs’ and must be accommodated if cats are to stay healthy. There are three common causes for dietary deficiency in cats:

• Feeding dog food. Because dog food lacks nutrients that cats need, feeding dog food to cats can lead to blindness, kidney disease, and heart problems, among other things. Problems relating to feeding dog food to cats can surface in a matter of days, and some of the conditions are irreversible.

• Feeding poor-quality cat food that is not nutritionally complete.

• Feeding cat foods that have an improper balance of amino acids, the building blocks of protein. This can occur when single-source protein foods (such as liver, tuna, shrimp, etc.) are fed exclusively and can even occur with so-called “gourmet” foods.

The best feline diet contains a variety of protein and calorie sources. For palatability, the food must also have an acceptable odor and texture. For the shelter, both requirements are reliably met by a good-quality dry cat food. Remember that kittens between six weeks and 12 months should have kitten food, moistened, if needed. It is important to remember that, unlike dogs’, cats’ eating habits are greatly influenced by their environment. People, noises, and the presence of other animals can all influence whether a cat will eat, so it is best to leave food down overnight for cats and kittens.

The Chester County SPCA uses disposable paper food trays for feeding cats because cats are highly susceptible to oral transmission of infectious diseases such as leukemia, feline immunodeficiency virus, FIP, and upper respiratory viruses. Paper trays also eliminate the problem of taste or odor from residual disinfectant on food bowls, which can inhibit a cat’s appetite.

Feeding Time: Mundane Chore or Opportunity for Excellence?
Feeding and clean-up time should be utilized as...
opportunities to get to know the animals in your care and to observe each of them for health or behavior problems or special needs. This is one reason why self-feeders are not recommended. (Other reasons include potential spoilage, pests, and inability to regulate intake.)

Since a lack of appetite is often the first sign of a problem, it is essential that shelter personnel be attentive to animals who are not eating. Every shelter should have some system for monitoring daily eating habits. Even without a veterinarian on the premises, there are several easy things staff can check or do if an animal is not eating:

- Check the food to be sure it has no undesirable odor or contamination.
- Check to see if the food is for injuries, sores, or foreign bodies. Also, especially with stray cats, be sure to move the jaw to determine if it is fractured. A fractured jaw can be present with no other signs of injury.
- Check the animal’s temperature, pulse, and breathing.
- Look for other signs of illness such as listlessness, vomiting, diarrhea, or ocular or nasal discharge.
- Try a different kind of food. Cats and small dogs often will eat only one type of canned—or worse yet—home-cooked food. Call the owner or ask at check-in what the animal usually eats. Cats can become addicted to single-source protein gourmet foods and may turn their noses up at shelter fare. Have a supply of these foods available to use for your finicky felines. Cats have a very high metabolic rate and will lose condition rapidly if they are not eating.
- How you feed the animals in your care is of utmost importance and should be done by caring people who are knowledgeable about the animals’ needs and general health. All animals should be able to eat individually, without competing for food. One of the few creature comforts a shelter animal has is dinner. It should be a priority to provide the animals in your care with the best food and mealtime experience possible.

**Report on Bad Experiences at Shelters**

I was in no hurry, that I’d be willing to wait. I had hoped to find a female golden retriever—and left me feeling like the Rodney Dangerfield of pet lovers: “I just didn’t get no respect.”

I was told by staffers at the clinic that the dog was obviously malnourished, though she seemed otherwise healthy enough and was certainly affectionate and eager to get out of the kennel. She was very hyper, but what animal wouldn’t be after being in a cage for two months?

I was told by staff at the clinic that the dog had been abandoned by owners who had moved nothing against it. I preferred a spayed dog, one between six months and two years old who could spend many happy years with me.

I first visited one very well-known shelter in the area. A worker told me it was a slow time of year, that they weren’t getting very many dogs. Although I found this a little peculiar, I told them I was in no hurry, that I’d be willing to wait. I asked if they’d take my name and phone number and call me in the event one came in. That would not only be good for me but for the shelter as well, I reasoned, since they could place a dog as soon as he or she came in. The less they had to spend on food, veterinary care, etc., the better.

When I arrived on Friday, they told me she wasn’t spayed! And that I had to make an appointment to do this! Why didn’t they spay her during the week, I asked, since they knew I was picking her up on Friday? They simply stared at me blankly. They asked for the $95. It seemed like that was all they were concerned about.

I was given two weeks to decide whether or not to keep the dog. Unhappily, things did not work out. I kept her the entire two weeks, hoping things would improve. Instead, her bad habits—which were numerous—got worse. I finally gave up after she bit me, figuring that if she came after me she might go after others.

I’m sorry to say that these experiences have left me with negative feelings about the shelters and animal clinic. In almost every case, workers were abrupt at the least and downright rude at the worst. I got very little help.

Since word of mouth is a powerful advertisement, this can’t be the best way to establish good relations with the community or place as many animals as possible.
Shelters Must Dictate Policy When Working with Breed-Specific Rescue Groups

By Geoffrey L. Handy

A few months ago, the Aiken SPCA (401 Wire Rd., Aiken, SC 29801) found itself under fire from individual members of several local breed-specific rescue groups. According to the SPCA, the individuals were “demanding”—among other things—that the shelter turn over purebred animals to them to increase their chances for adoption through fostering.

The SPCA decided to seek a cooperative relationship with the local purebred-rescue groups. The agency invited representatives from the groups to voice their concerns before a full board meeting. Keeping its own objectives in mind, the SPCA then hammered out a specific policy regarding the handling of purebred dogs.

The dealings between the Aiken SPCA and breed-rescue groups in its area reflect growing relationships between those agencies charged with sheltering all homeless animals and those groups that handle the rescue and placement of particular breeds.

“Breed-specific rescue groups can be of great assistance to animal shelters in reducing the burden of finding suitable homes for displaced companion animals,” says Shirley Weaver in the preface to her national directory of breed-specific rescue groups, The Project BREED Directory (see the February 1990 issue of Shelter Sense for ordering information).

These purebred rescue groups generally consist of members who are active in particular kennel or breed clubs and who are knowledgeable about the breed’s usual traits, from general temperament to common health defects. Recognizing the effects of pet overpopulation on the particular breed of dog they fancy, these groups work for the rescue and placement of that breed, usually through an informal network of foster homes and/or kennels. In many cases, responsible purebred-rescue groups handle adoptions in much the same way responsible animal shelters do: they spay and neuter all dogs, have stringent adoption requirements that include home checks, have their own adoption contracts, etc.

From the groups’ perspective, they can also help shelter animals by evaluating dogs of that breed (including temperament testing), building adoption waiting lists, evaluating potential adopters, and educating those adopters about the breed’s physical and behavioral tendencies.

Relationships between animal shelters and breed-rescue groups can be mutually beneficial and can result in more and better homes for larger numbers of animals. Problems arise, however, when breed-rescue groups make demands on public and private animal shelters, while at the same time, the shelters fail to develop policies that allow them to identify and work with responsible groups. Problems also occur when animal shelters place implicit trust in purebred-rescue groups that may operate at cross-purposes to the shelters and even contribute to pet overpopulation.

Certainly, promoting animal adoptions must be one of the ongoing endeavors of any animal shelter. With purebreds composing up to 25 percent of all shelter animals, responsible breed-specific rescue groups can be a valuable asset in meeting the goal of increased adoptions.

A higher adoption rate, however, shouldn’t be the blind ambition of any animal shelter. “Responsible animal shelters must have policies that promote a humane disposition for each animal and also prevent unwanted animals from being born,” says Barbara Cassidy, HSUS director of animal sheltering and control.

If the shelter can work alongside a breed-specific rescue group to promote adoptions without compromising its overall goals and the policies that are consistent with them, then they should by all means do so, says Cassidy. “But if breed-rescue groups are unwilling to comply with the policies and procedures of the agency, then shelters have no obligation to work with the group.”

“Purebreds animals with or without papers are in the shelter because they are unwanted—and no purebred animal should leave the shelter without first being spayed or neutered,” says Phyllis Wright, HSUS vice president for companion animals. “Shelters can’t become revolving doors in their placements, regardless of whether the animals are purebred or cross breeds. They shouldn’t have the same requirements for all dogs and find homes that will be lifelong homes.”

The key is to institute sound policies and procedures that allow the shelter to work effectively with any breed-specific rescue club. Shelters should be especially wary of unethical groups. Not all purebred-rescue groups are bona fide organizations whose main purpose is the rescue, sterilization, and careful adoption of certain breeds. Calling themselves members of “rescue groups,” some individuals have even asked the Aiken SPCA for unspayed dogs with American Kennel Club (AKC) registration papers—undoubtedly for purposes of showing and even breeding the animals.

The HSUS believes that two policies can ensure that unethical breed-rescue groups don’t profit from shelter animals and contribute directly to the pet overpopulation problem. These related policies should already be standard practice for humane and animal control agencies.

First and most important, every animal should leave the shelter without first being spayed or neutered. This policy should be cast in stone, regardless of whether the purebred is adopted out to a board member or to an adopter referred to the shelter by a breed-rescue group.

The HSUS urges animal shelters to require that dogs, upon adoption, be spayed or neutered. “If the pet owner later wants to return the dog to the AKC, he will have to have the dog spayed or neutered again,” says Cassidy.

The AKC does not generally present poten­tive adopters for dogs adopted from animal shelters. “Responsible rescue organizations may apply to the AKC for a special license forSuch a license can authorize a shelter to issue an AKC registration to any dog adopted from an animal shelter.”

The AKC does not object to papers being mailed to the AKC, c/o Registration, 55 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10010, so that they can be returned to the rescue group. As a matter of fact, the AKC accepts only those dogs that have been sterilized and physically altered, as evidenced by the signature of a veterinarian. The AKC lists dogs on its Waiting List for Adoption. Both the purebred and the mixed breed dogs, along with their pedigrees, are then mailed to the AKC. The AKC then returns the completed forms to the shelter, where they are used to fill out the paperwork for the new owner. The AKC does not object to papers being mailed to the AKC, c/o Registration, 55 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10010, so that they can be returned to the rescue group.

Purebreds may be fancied, but mixed breeds equally deserve a loving home.
All Dog Bites Aren’t Equal
By Patricia Gail Burnham
Condensed and Adapted from Dog World Magazine, April 1990

You would think Americans would be authori- ties on dog bites. After all, there are newspaper stories every time someone runs afoul of a “pit bull,” and these stories often quote the national figures for dog bites and for people killed by dogs.

According to dogbite statistics, 70 people were killed by dog attacks in this country during the last five years, which is an average of about 14 fatalities per year. But every year, two to three million dog bites are reported, and only one-tenth of all bites are thought to be reported. So what is the difference between the dozen or so attacks that kill people and the two million that don’t—and the possibly 20 million that are not even reported to authorities?

Isn’t a bite just a bite? Why should we care what kind of bite it is? Aren’t they all equal? The answer is “No, they are not.” And if we know the types of possible bites and the reasons behind them, it becomes much easier to keep ourselves and our community’s children and dogs from becoming part of the statistics.

Part of the problem is that the news media divide dog bites into two kinds: those by “pit bulls” and those by any other dogs. They are right in that it is possible to divide dog bites into categories, but they have the categories wrong. To students of animal behavior and dog trainers the two main categories of dog bites are uninhibited bites and inhibited bites.

Uninhibited bites are those rare and impressive bites that get a lot of publicity. They are not single slashes or a couple of punctures. These are the attacks that kill people—big dogs using all their strength and formidable teeth.

So what causes a few dogs to lose their inhibited biting reflex? Insanity is one cause. There are dogs whose reactions are not normal, and often not predictable. Some of these are violent, and some are not.

There are more dogs whose inhibitions have been broken down. Dogs who have been fought professionally have usually had training designed to destroy their inhibitions against biting other dogs. But because they have to be handled in the ring during a fight, it is to their trainers’ advantage if the dogs remember not to bite people.

Under what circumstances does an owner want a dog who will bite people? There is really only one situation: when the dog is being used to guard something, whether that is a yard or a drug stash. Properly trained guard dogs are taught obedience and are under control. An amateur owner can often break down the dog’s inhibitions without bothering to teach control. And those dogs are walking time bombs. They are dogs who have been taught that biting is OK.

It is possible to end up with such a dog unintentionally. Sometimes the training is not even done by the owner. A dog who is chained up, or enclosed by a wire fence that gives no privacy, is an easy target for young and old kids with a mean streak. They find it daring to incite a dog into a rage as long as that dog cannot reach them. The problem comes if the dog ever gets loose, and the tragedy is that he may attack any passing child and not the ones who tormented him. And even the ones who tormented him were probably too thoughtless to understand what they were creating.

There are times when a bite really is an accident on the dog’s part. It is not even necessary for the dog to bite down to fulfill the requirements of a dog bite. While playing with my dogs, I have on several different occasions accidentally run my hand against their teeth and cut my skin. They had never even closed their mouths. They certainly did not intend to bite me. But technically these may qualify as bites.

There are also unintentional bites that are actually misdirected. That is, the dog did intend to bite or discipline something, but not the person who was bitten. Misdirected bites can be very serious because the dog is putting a lot of force behind them, an appropriate amount of force for what he thinks he is striking at, which may be entirely too much for a human recipient.

Sometimes even a single discipline strike can go wrong and result in very serious consequences. A few years ago, there was a court case centered on a bite by a large male show dog. From the accounts that were printed at the time, it sounded as if this is what happened: The dog was asleep on the floor in his owner’s house. The elderly grandmother of the household got up in the night, tripped and fell across the sleeping dog. Pack leaders do not tolerate being stepped on by subordinates. He responded with what appeared to be a single discipline strike and drove a canine tooth into her artery, killing her quickly. There were none of the repetitive bites or the crushing power of an uninhibited attack. If
the single tooth had missed the vital area, it might have been another unreported family dog bite—a case of a dog disciplining a family pack member he considered weaker than himself. Instead it was a family tragedy and a field day for the press.

...so his inhibitions may be gone.

biter?

...his ears will be pinned back. His eyes will be --vitilis--glassy-eyed with fear, and if a person in-...urinate submissively. These dogs become absolutely glassy-eyed with fear, and if a person in-...vice to both the public and the animals.

...the better their interactions with dogs are going to be. And the more you know about why dogs can become prone to bite, the safer your job is going to be.

...the only state-run spaying and neutering program in the country continues its amazing run of success.

...that lumping all dog bites into the same category does a disservice to both the public and the animals themselves. The more people know about the different kinds of bites and their different causes, the better their interactions with dogs are going to be. And the more you know about why dogs bite, the safer your job is going to be.
remove the container. Neighbors estimated that the dog had survived for over two weeks with the container on her head.

Hollis contacted Kal Kan, the cat food company that put out this type of container under its Crave® label. The company explained that the container was intended for small animal and was to be discontinued, which it has been.

But Purina is now marketing its Deli-Cat® cat food in a similar plastic jug. The Deli-Cat container comes in two sizes, the larger of which corresponds to the size and shape of the Crave container the dog was caught in. The jug is clear plastic, containing 56 ounces of food and has an opening 4½ inches in diameter—large enough for medium-sized dogs to get their muzzles and heads through if trying to get at food inside. The smaller size container (holding 18 ounces) has an opening of 2½ inches—too small for most dogs, but big enough for kittens or puppies to become entrapped.

A spokesman for Purina says the packaging is being tested. The company pointed out that the screw-on lid should prevent pets from being able to get inside the container. However, consumers not only pose a potential hazard to hungry strays or even pets at home, but are also environmentally undesirable. Cat and dog food traditionally has been packed in paper sacks or cardboard boxes, both of which are biodegradable. Plastic containers are made from petroleum, a non-renewable resource, and do not degrade. Although they are recyclable, the difficulty in finding a place to take plastic for recycling makes it likely that these and other plastic containers will simply be thrown away.

You can write to Purina and let them know your concerns about their plastic packaging. Tell them about the dog in this article and ask them to consider changing the packaging. Tell them about the difficulty in finding a place to take plastic for recycling and the environmental impacts of using plastic, especially for products that are not recyclable. You can also write to other companies that use plastic packaging for pet food and ask them to consider making a change.

Carol Jones went to great lengths to contact a wide variety of celebrities.

Society Holds Celebrity Auction

A tote bag from Elizabeth Taylor, a golf ball signed by Jack Nicklaus, and several autographed items from the rock band The Grateful Dead were just a few of the celebrity items auctioned off last March 24 by the Humane Society for Animal Welfare (P.O. Box 5683 EKS, Johnson City, TN 37603-5683). The unique fundraiser brought in over $2,000 for the society’s spay/neuter assistance fund. The fund, established in 1985, has provided some 450 low-income pet owners with $20 subsidies for the cost of spaying or neutering.

The celebrity auction was the brainchild of Carol Jones, former board chairperson of the society. Jones worked nine months on the project, with most of her time spent finding addresses. She sent over 2,800 letters to celebrities ranging from rap groups to politicians. She even made the effort to learn the names and addresses of stars she wasn’t familiar with, such as pro wrestlers and rock groups.

Celebrities donated some 280 items in response to her letters, including autographed photos, T-shirts, and posters. Items of note included a script from the television series M*A*S*H, a baseball signed by Willie Mays, and an autographed copy of Richard Nixon’s No More Vietnams. “Those who couldn’t donate items responded anyway,” Jones said. “I even received calls from several celebrities who wanted to know more about the auction and why I was doing it.”

Over 80 people attended the auction. The highest single bid was $90 for an original, autographed design of a Grateful Dead T-shirt. This was actually Jones’ second celebrity auction for the humane society. In 1987, her first one raised money that was donated to the Washington County-Johnson City Animal Control Center, the public shelter the society works with. She plans to hold a third auction in a couple of years.

After this latest event, Jones made sure the celebrities knew her appreciation. “I sent every one a thank you note,” she said.

Rabies Information a Call Away

Need general information on rabies or tick bites? Getting calls from community members on these subjects? Now there is a hotline that provides the answers. The Rabies and Rickettsial Diseases Hotline is a 24-hour, automated phone system created by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) that provides callers with information on rabies, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, and human ehrlichiosis. Menu options include information on tick bites, rabies prevention, and procedures for reporting physical reactions to the rabies vaccine. The hotline also includes instructions for obtaining written materials.

To access this information, call the CDC Information Hotline at (404) 332-4555.

Solutions to Wildlife Nuisances

You’ve heard the questions—“How can downtown merchants keep birds from nesting in their eaves? What can be done to keep rabbits from eating petunias? How do you get a skunk out of a window well?” The solutions to these and many other wildlife-related problems are found in the new Pocket Guide To the Humane Control of Wildlife in Cities and Towns, published by The HSUS. This handy guide covers the natural history, legal status, and public health concerns for over 24 species or groups of animals. The damage each type of animal can cause, as well as the most effective means of controlling the damage, is carefully explained.

Following the theory of animal-proofing (deterrent wild animals so that they don’t become nuisances) rather than exterminating, the guide clearly illustrates the various methods of deterring animals and recommends the best methods for individual situations.

In addition, the guide discusses various zones that are of concern to people working with wild animals. Sixteen zones are outlined, and the guide lists how they are transmitted and how infection can be prevented. What to do if bitten or injured by an animal is also covered. Rounding out the guide is a list of product sources for wildlife-damage control. Devices to humanely trap, exclude, deter, and repel wildlife are available from the numerous sources listed. This guide should be in every shelter. Personnel answering the phones will refer to it often. No longer does a question like “How do you get an armadillo out from under your house?” have to be a stumper. Have copies on hand to sell or give out to patrons. And field officers can use the guide to show people how to cope with their wildlife problems.

The guide costs $4.00 per single copy but only $3.25 for 50–99 copies and $2.25 for 100 or more. Order from The HSUS, at 2100 L St., NW, Washington, DC 20007.

Kitty Note Cards Available

Whimsical note cards featuring four designs of kittens in colorful, cozy surroundings are available at a special price from HSUS. These 4" × 6" cards come in sets of 12 with matching envelopes for only $4.00 per pack. If you order three or more packs, the cost is only $3.00 per pack.

Each card is blank inside so the sender can write his or her own message. Supplies of these cards are available at a special price from HSUS. These 4" × 6" cards come in sets of 12 with matching envelopes for only $4.00 per pack. If you order three or more packs, the cost is only $3.00 per pack.
**Dogbite Prevention for Workers**

Letter carriers are well known among frequent dogbite victims. Because of the nature of their jobs, they and other delivery personnel, utility workers, meter readers, and home repairmen fall victim to bites by aggressive dogs far more often than the typical person.

That’s why RMI Corporation, a company specializing in safety training programs, sells three booklets and a video on dogbite prevention specifically for workers who enter other people’s property as part of their regular jobs.

One booklet, entitled *Dogbite Prevention Program*, presents general safety precautions all workers should take to avoid being bitten. It tells how to identify threatening signals, how to escape a challenge by a dog, and what to do if actually attacked. The other two booklets build on that information for specific situations: delivering parcels and other materials requiring the customer’s signature, and entering and working in the customer’s home.

The booklets are specifically designed for use in classroom training sessions, although they are just as effective for self-instruction. They feature easy-to-read text and helpful, two-color graphics. Simple review questions appear throughout each booklet to reinforce what is taught, and an answer sheet is included on the inside back cover. An outstanding new dogbite prevention video for workers is also available. This masterfully produced 15-minute video shows workers the best ways to handle threatening situations.

Humane agencies could use the booklets and video to offer their own training sessions for local companies, or they could simply refer companies to RMI. Each order of booklets is accompanied by an administration manual with tips on conducting a seminar. For prices and ordering information, contact RMI at 391 Totten Pond Rd., Waltham, MA 02154; (617) 890-9430. Ask about their 15% discount for humane agencies.

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**How to Avoid Getting Bitten by a Dog**

Everyone knows a dog is man’s best friend. And it is generally true. But every dog has the capacity to bite, and children are most often the ones who get bitten. Everyone, particularly children, should learn some basics about dog behavior and safety around dogs.

When Dogs Might Bite

- When they feel threatened or afraid.
- When they are protecting their territory, food, toys, family, or pups.
- When they get excited, even in play.
- When they don’t know you.
- When their “chase response” is triggered.
- When they have been bred and/or trained to be aggressive.
- When they are in pain or irritated.

How To Tell When A Dog Might Bite

- The dog may stand stiff and still, maybe with his or her hair up.
- The dog may stare at you.
- The dog may hold his or her tail stiff and up in the air, and may wag it back and forth very fast.
- The dog may growl, snarl, show teeth, or bark.

What To Do If You Get Bitten

- Try to stay until the dog leaves.
- If you do anything, speak calmly and firmly.
- If you are attacked, try to stay until the dog leaves.
- If a dog does attack suddenly, “feed” him or her your jacket, purse, your bike, anything that may distract the dog and give the animal something to bite besides you.
- If you fall or are knocked down, curl into a ball with your arms and hands over your head and neck. Try not to scream or roll around.

What To Do If You Get Bitten

- Children should tell their parents immediately. All bites should be reported to the police or animal control department.
- Go to the hospital for treatment.
- Tell the policeman or animal control officer as much as you can about the dog—what he or she looked like, where you saw the animal, if you’ve seen the dog before, and so on. It’s important for them to try to find the dog.

Remember: Most Dog Bites Are Avoidable

(If you wish to add your organization’s name, please ask.)

Provided by The Humane Society of the United States.
Art by Beverly Armstrong
Pope Urges Kindness to Animals

By Phyllis Wright, HSUS Vice President for Companion Animals

With the new year come new ideas and bright beginnings. I am thrilled to tell you that animal protection has been given a hand of support from the Catholic Church. In a speech, Pope John Paul II announced that animals are “the fruit of the creative action of the Holy Spirit and merit respect.” He went on to say that “the animals possess a soul and that men must love and feel solidarity with our smaller brethren.”

According to the Catholic Information Center in Washington, DC, this belief has long been a part of Catholic philosophy. The Pope’s affirmation of it now is simply his way of saying that he wants people to be kind to animals.

Many humane groups have run up against people who assume that because God gave men “dominion” over the animals, the latter were lesser beings than people and that cruelty to them did not matter. But the Pope’s official statement negates this notion.

To spread the word that kindness to animals is a moral requirement, the Catholic Study Circle for Animal Welfare (39 Onslow Gardens, London E18 1ND, England) has published a leaflet detailing the Pope’s message. You can obtain a copy of this leaflet by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Shelter Sense, 5430 Grosvenor Lane, Suite 100, Bethesda, MD 20814. Feel free to make additional copies to distribute in your community. But please copy the leaflet in its entirety and give credit to the Catholic Study Circle for Animal Welfare.

The Pope’s statement lends weight to animal protection messages. Make his words known to local churches and civic groups; publish them in your newsletter. Let his official position help you in your work to protect animals.

The Pope’s message is further indication that the tide is turning in favor of animals. Don’t miss this opportunity to make some headway while conditions are favorable. For the upcoming new year, resolve to make a change in your shelter or community. Come up with something you would like to see changed and then set out to do it by defining your goal, setting ways to attain it, and doing what it takes. You may be surprised at what you can accomplish.