

# Animal and human bites

**You have been treated in the Emergency Department following an animal or human bite. This leaflet gives advice on how to care for your wound at home.**

## Your treatment in the Emergency Department

- Animal bites (such as dog bites) and human bites are a relatively common type of injury.
- All bites and scratches will be cleaned thoroughly.
- A deep wound may not be stitched or may be closed with paper stiches (called steri-strips) due to the risk of infection. Leaving the wound open makes it easier to keep clean. Usually a dressing will be applied.
- If an arm has been affected, you might need to wear a high sling to help stop any swelling.
- Do not worry as most of these wounds will close as they heal.
- Rarely, the wound may require stitching at a later date, once the risk of infection has passed.

## Do I need antibiotics or a tetanus?

Antibiotics will only be prescribed if there is a risk of infection.

If you have not had a full course of tetanus vaccinations, you may need a tetanus injection.

## Human bites

In the case of a bite from a human, a blood sample may be collected for further tests. You may also be given the first dose of anti-hepatitis B vaccine injection. In this case, you will need to make an appointment with your GP for further follow-up treatment that may include:

- Completion of a course of anti-hepatitis B vaccine.
- Counselling.
- Further blood tests at three and six months.

## Important information

Following any animal or human bite, you should seek further advice immediately if you develop any of these symptoms:

- Increased redness or swelling around the wound.
- A red line extending from the wound up your arm or leg.
- The wound becomes more painful.
- Pus is leaking from the wound.
- A high temperature or feeling unwell.

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**Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.**

K O'Hagan, Lead Advanced Practitioner, Emergency Department, June 2023.

Next review due: June 2025

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