Animal Bites

Animal bites have a high rate of infection, so they require thorough cleaning. Animal bites may become infected in spite of good cleaning. The teeth carry germs (*bacteria*) below the skin surface. Bites may require tetanus and rabies vaccines. The animal should be confined if possible for ten days to make sure there is no development of rabies. Medications which kill germs (*antibiotics*) may be required.

YOU MIGHT NEED A TETANUS SHOT NOW IF:

- You have no idea when you had the last one.
- You have never had a tetanus shot before.
- Your wound had dirt in it.
- If you need a tetanus shot, and you choose not to get one, there is a rare chance of getting tetanus. Sickness from tetanus can be serious.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- You may need to report the event to animal control or your local police.
- Keep wound clean, dry and dressed as suggested by your caregiver.
- Keep the injured part elevated as much as possible.
- Do not resume use of the affected area until directed.
- If antibiotics were prescribed, take them as directed and finish the prescription.
- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You develop a fever above 101° F (38.9° C).
- The wound becomes more red and sore (*inflamed*) and swollen, or has a pus-like (*purulent*) discharge.
- Your pain is not controlled with medication.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You develop nausea or vomiting.
- You have chills or a high temperature.
- If pain prevents joint from movement.

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

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