

Bite wounds

Bite wounds need prompt treatment to avoid infection.

A common injury in pets, bites frequently become infected with oral bacteria. Even a small, superficial wound can hide serious, deeper injuries to muscles, tendons, vessels, nerves, bones, or organs.

Cat bites

Typically small puncture wounds, cat bites often seal over, trapping bacteria under the skin and creating an abscess.

Dog bites

Dog teeth can both puncture and crush to cause deep, serious internal tissue damage as well as surface wounds.

- ▶ If your pet is severely bitten, immediately bring them in for veterinary care.

What do they look like?

Common signs:

- Visible wounds
- Bleeding, swelling, or discharge
- Pain, sensitivity, or limping
- Unusual licking at the site, which may have matted hair

- ▶ Bite wounds hidden by skin folds or hair may not be obvious until they become painful or infected.



How are they diagnosed?

- Your pet's history, like recent interactions with other pets
 - Clinical signs, like bleeding or swelling
 - Physical exam results
- ▶ Deeper and more serious wounds may require X-rays, or need to be evaluated under anesthesia.



How are they treated?

Treatment is based on the extent and severity of the injuries. All treatments involve clipping and cleaning the area, and may include pain relief and antibiotics.

- Significant injuries can require surgery under anesthesia for deep tissue flushing and repair
- Your pet may need surgical sutures, drains, or surgical staples

- ▶ Good home care helps recovery. Make sure your pet wears an e-collar at all times to avoid aggravating their wounds.



How to help your pet

- Administer all medications as prescribed
- Carefully follow any postsurgical, bandage, or wound care instructions, including activity restrictions and e-collar use
- Monitor your pet carefully and come in for checkups as recommended, or if you have concerns
- Contact your veterinary team with any questions

