



Marion County Board of County Commissioners

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HAVE A DOG-BITE-FREE SUMMER

Immediate Release

MARION COUNTY, Fla. (May 17, 2010) – You teach your children to wash their hands so they don't spread germs. You teach them to stop, drop and roll in case their clothes catch on fire. You teach them how to swim and have them wear flotation devices until they learn. But do you teach your children how to properly interact with their four-legged friends?

Approximately 50 percent of all children nationwide will be bitten by a dog before their 12th birthday, according to the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. However, most dog bites are preventable. Marion County Animal Services wants to give you the following tips to help you have a dog-bite free summer.

- Always ask the owner's permission before petting a strange dog. Then, ask the dog's permission by turning your hand palm-down and allowing the dog to sniff your hand.
- Don't approach or touch a dog that's sleeping, eating, caring for puppies, fighting or chained in a yard. Dogs can be startled if you wake them suddenly and can be highly protective of their food, property and puppies.
- If approached by a strange dog, don't run and scream. Stand still and silent (like a tree) and don't make eye contact with the dog. Dogs view direct eye contact as challenging and loud noises and sudden movement as scary or threatening. When the dog loses interest, walk away slowly. Dogs are apt to join in on a game of chase if anyone attempts to run away.
- If children are bitten by a dog, teach them to tell an adult, wash the wound with warm water and soap and contact Marion County Animal Services (352-671-8727) immediately. This will help ensure the wound doesn't get infected and others don't get hurt from the same dog.

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