

Safety around Animals

Pets can be a great addition to any family and offer a range of health benefits. When choosing a pet, think about your family's lifestyle, level of activity, space and time available. Discuss your choice with the RSPCA, a vet, breeder or trainer before purchasing an animal.

Obedience training is a vital part of responsible pet ownership, however regardless of careful pet selection and training, animals can still be unpredictable. Supervision of children around pets and other animals is crucial.



Why are children at risk?

While all children can be at risk of injury from an animal, children under five are most vulnerable. There are a number of factors that leave young children exposed to injuries from animals. They include:

- Small size
- Instability and developing balance
- Inquisitive nature and inability to assess risk
- Still developing awareness of self i.e. pressure of touch, loudness of voice
- Lack of knowledge of how to behave around animal

Children and animals

The following tips will help to keep your family safe around animals:

1. Always supervise young children around animals.
2. Do not disturb an animal that is eating, sleeping or caring for young. Move slowly and calmly around animals and do not approach if they appear agitated.
3. Remember any dog can bite if it feels threatened.
4. If horse riding, match children to a horse of suitable to their age. Ensure equipment is in good condition and that helmets and boots are always worn. Children and adults should take part in lessons to ensure they are competent in handling the horse in a range of situations.
5. Keep gardens well maintained to eliminate hiding places for insects, spiders and reptiles.
6. Learn how to treat bites and stings of animals that live in areas that you and your family frequent.



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