

CITY OF BELMONT

Aggressive Dogs: Warning Signs

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Some Common Myths About Dog Attacks

Myth 1 - Only certain breeds of dogs will attack people.

FALSE! Any age, breed, sex and size of dog may bite. Some dogs or breeds of dogs may be more likely to bite than others if not socialised, trained and controlled properly. What the dog owner does with the dog after it is born is more important in preventing aggression than the dog's breeding.

Myth 2 - Only cross breed dogs bite.

FALSE! Pedigree dogs will bite for the same reasons as cross breeds and as often.

Myth 3 - A dog that attacks livestock or other animals is always a danger to people as well.

FALSE! Not all dogs which attack other animals are dangerous to people.

Myth 4 - Dogs only attack if the person has provoked the dog by teasing or cruelty.

FALSE! Dog attacks can be provoked accidentally and the victim is not always to blame.

Myth 5 - Dogs will bite people if they are fed fresh meat.

FALSE! A dog's diet will not make it attack people.

Myth 6 - It is normal for a dog to growl or snap at you or other people occasionally.

FALSE! These are early warning signs of aggression and must be taken seriously. Professional advice should be sought immediately.

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Recognising The Early Signs Of Aggression

Does your dog ever tense up, stare, raise its hackles, growl, lift its lips or snap when:

- eating or when food is around?
- its ears, paws, tail or belly are touched?
- someone goes near its bed or toys?
- someone tries to move the dog from a comfortable spot?
- it is told off?
- someone pulls on its collar?
- someone grabs the dog or tries to pick it up?
- it is approached by people, children or other dogs?

Does your dog lunge out at people or dogs when out walking?

Does your dog rush out barking and growling at passers-by?

If the answer is “yes” to any of these situations, then your dog may be aggressive. These are the early warning signs. You need to seek professional advice as your dog’s behaviour is likely to get worse not better, with time.

Don’t wait until someone has been seriously bitten. The sooner you seek help the more easily the problem can be solved.

Does your dog get very nervous, cower away or try to run away from children, adults or other dogs?

If “yes”, your dog could be dangerous if it ever feels threatened or cornered and may attack out of fear. You need to seek professional advice to help your dog overcome its fear.

If you are concerned about your dog’s behaviour, please consult your veterinarian who may be able to help you or refer you to an animal behaviourist. Your dog may also require further socialisation and obedience training.

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