

# ANIMAL BITES

Animal bites may cause infections if they rip or puncture the skin. Wounds caused by animal bites must be cleansed immediately with soap and warm water. Some animal bites carry germs that may cause serious infections like tetanus (lockjaw) and rabies. Wounds caused by wild animal bites should always be taken seriously.

**Please follow these instructions carefully:**

- Always tell your doctor/caregiver what type of animal caused the bite.
- Keep the area of the bite clean and dry. Elevate above heart if possible.
- Wash the bite wound with warm soap and water 3-4 times a day.
- Ice will help the swelling in the first 1-2 days.

**Return to the Emergency Department or see your own doctor right away if any problems develop, including the following:**

- You think the bite wound is becoming infected (red, swollen, tender, pus drainage or red streaks).
- You have trouble walking, talking or breathing.
- You have trouble swallowing and you have a stiff jaw or stiff neck.
- You feel worse in any way.

**The Emergency Department is open 24 hours a day for any problems.**

