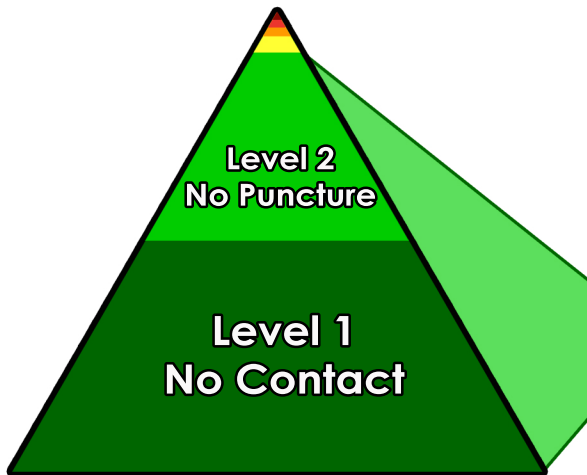
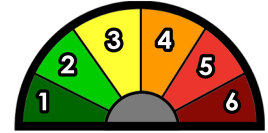


Putting dog bites into perspective with the Bite Scale

Developed by Ian Dunbar PhD, BVetMed, MRCVS



The Bite Scale



Level 1 - No Contact

Level 2 - No Puncture

Level 3 - Shallow Puncture

Level 4 - Deep Puncture

Level 5 - Multiple Bites

Level 6 - Victim Dead

**Over 99% of “Dog Bites”
are Level 1 or Level 2**

***These “bites” didn’t puncture the skin,
and these dogs are not dangerous***

Dogs can be dangerous. Dogs can and do kill people. However, it is exceedingly rare.

Dr. Ian Dunbar developed the Bite Scale to objectively assess the severity of dog bites. In doing so, he learned that it is very rare for a dog to bite a person hard enough to cause a serious injury. When Dr. Dunbar looked at the data collected by hospitals while treating “dog bite” incidents, he found that 92.4% of so-called “bites” were rated with an ISS (Injury Severity Score) of 0, while 7.5% were rated ISS=1, and less than 1% were ISS 2 or greater. At the time, the ISS was a scale from 0-16, with ISS 0 = No injury, 1-3 Minor injury, 4-7 = Moderate, 8-15= Serious, and 16 = Severe to Critical.

Therefore, Levels 1 and 2 comprise well over 99% of dog incidents. These dogs are not dangerous and are unlikely to cause a serious biting injury. However, they are probably fearful, rambunctious, and/or out of control. Quickly resolve the problem with basic training, Classical Conditioning, progressive desensitization, handling and bite-inhibition exercises. **Wonderful prognosis.**

Level 3: These dogs probably have bite inhibition and are a little dangerous. Without treatment, other Level 3 bites will likely follow with a slow, albeit progressive, increase in severity, especially if the dog is stressed, frightened, cornered or mishandled etc. Employ the same treatment protocols as above, with additional attention to safety. Rigorous bite-inhibition exercises are essential. Treatment is both time-consuming and not without danger. **Prognosis is fair to good, if you have owner compliance.**

Levels 4: These dogs have insufficient bite inhibition and are dangerous. Only work with the dog in exceptional circumstances with 100% owner compliance and a detailed management protocol that will ensure the dog will not injure anyone except the dog's adult owners. This dog should not remain in a home with children. Unfortunately, owner compliance is uncommon and teaching bite inhibition to an adult hard-biting dog is difficult and dangerous. **The prognosis is poor.**

Level 5 and 6: The dog is extremely dangerous and mutilates. The dog is simply not safe around people. Euthanasia should be considered. It is very challenging to find a home for a dog that has maimed or killed a person and even then, these dogs will be required to live a solitary and confined life to ensure that they do not harm anyone else.

The prognosis is dire.