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doh reminds residents to avoid
contact with stray pets and wildlife

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**Tallahassee, Fla.**—After storms and flooding, pets may be displaced.  Any loose pet may be lost, frightened, or hurt – and more likely to bite. Even animals that are usually friendly may bite if they are scared or hurt.

To avoid being bitten:

* Do not approach stray pets or wildlife.
* Do not feed or attempt to pet or handle stray pets or wildlife.
* Do not disturb an animal that is sleeping, eating or caring for its young.
* If a strange animal walks toward you, stay calm and slowly move away.
* Bites from dogs are the most commonly reported animal bite. Additional tips for preventing bites from dogs include:
* Dogs are more likely to bite other dogs than people; when walking your own pet dog, avoid areas where free-roaming dogs may be present.
* If another dog attacks your dog, don’t put any part of your body between the dogs; consider carrying a stick or another sturdy object that you can safely use to try to keep the aggressive dog away.
* Do not make eye-to-eye contact with a stray or aggressive acting dog.
* Do not run or scream if a stray dog approaches you – be “still like a tree.” If you fall or are knocked to the ground by a dog, curl into a ball with your hands over your head and neck. Protect your face. Try to stay still and do not scream.
* Report stray dogs to local authorities such as animal control.

**If you are bitten by an animal and emergency help is needed, go to a hospital or medical treatment area or call 911.**

* Take care of the bite wound:
* Before treating the wound, wash your hands with soap and clean fresh water.
* Remove any item that is in the way of caring for the wound.
* Put pressure on the wound with a clean cloth to stop bleeding.
* After the bleeding has stopped, pour bottled or clean running water over the wound.
* Gently clean around the wound with soap and clean water.
* Pat dry and use an adhesive bandage or dry clean cloth to cover the wound.
* Leave unclean wounds open.

**Report the bite to your local animal control agency if they are open. Tell the animal control official everything you know about the animal and where it went.**

CDC resources: <https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/animalhazards/index.html>

For further information, please contact your local county health department or visit [www.floridahealth.gov](http://www.floridahealth.gov/) or [www.FloridaDisaster.org](http://www.floridadisaster.org/).

During severe weather and other emergencies, you can count on active alerts from the department's official social media accounts. One of the fastest ways to receive official and accurate health-related information is to monitor [@HealthyFla](http://bulkmail.doh.state.fl.us/lt.php?c=2114&m=2637&nl=236&s=98f8a0d20d913e3319ae5eea5fd61011&lid=10708&l=-https--twitter.com/HealthyFla--Q-utm_source--E-ac) on Twitter and on [Facebook](http://bulkmail.doh.state.fl.us/lt.php?c=2114&m=2637&nl=236&s=98f8a0d20d913e3319ae5eea5fd61011&lid=10709&l=-https--www.facebook.com/FLDepartmentofHealth--Q-utm_source--E-ac).

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