

Bite Wounds

Family Matters

A bite wound can look surprisingly small.

Just two tiny puncture marks.

A little blood.

Your pet may even seem perfectly normal.

Unfortunately, what's happening **under the skin** is often much more serious than what you can see on the surface.

At Amity, we believe that bite wounds should never be underestimated. Our purpose is to **Empower You Through Education**, helping you understand why these injuries often require prompt veterinary attention.

Why Are Bite Wounds So Serious?

Teeth don't just break the skin.

They penetrate deep into the tissues, carrying bacteria from the mouth into muscles and beneath the skin.

The skin often closes over quickly, trapping bacteria inside and creating the perfect environment for an infection to develop.

What looks like a tiny puncture wound on the outside may hide extensive tissue damage underneath.

What Signs Should I Look For?

Immediately after the injury, you may notice:

- Small puncture wounds.
- Bleeding.
- Pain.
- Swelling.
- Limping.
- Reluctance to be touched.

Over the next few days, signs of infection may develop, including:

- Increasing swelling.
- Heat.

- Redness.
- Pus or discharge.
- A bad smell.
- Lethargy.
- Loss of appetite.

Abscesses commonly develop **two to five days** after the bite.

Should I Clean the Wound?

If your pet will allow it, gently flushing the wound with clean tap water or sterile saline can help remove dirt from the surface.

Avoid using hydrogen peroxide, alcohol or strong antiseptics, as these can damage healthy tissue.

Do not attempt to squeeze the wound or probe it.

Does Every Bite Need Antibiotics?

Not necessarily.

Some superficial wounds heal without complication.

However, because bite wounds often involve deep contamination that cannot be seen externally, many require antibiotics, pain relief or further treatment.

Your vet will decide what's appropriate after examining your pet.

Why Might Surgery Be Needed?

Some bite wounds need more than medication.

If there are large pockets of damaged tissue or infection beneath the skin, the wound may need to be opened, thoroughly flushed and cleaned under sedation or general anaesthesia.

Although this sounds more invasive, it often results in faster healing and fewer complications than simply leaving the wound closed.

What About Cat Bite Wounds?

Cat bites deserve special mention.

Cats have extremely sharp, narrow teeth that create tiny puncture wounds.

These small holes often seal rapidly, trapping bacteria deep beneath the skin.

As a result, cat bite wounds have a particularly high risk of developing painful abscesses.

If your cat has been involved in a fight—even if you can't see much injury—it's worth having them examined.

Early Treatment Prevents Bigger Problems

The earlier bite wounds are assessed, the easier they are usually to treat.

Prompt cleaning, appropriate antibiotics and pain relief can often prevent a simple wound from becoming a painful abscess requiring surgery.

At Amity, we'd always rather examine a bite wound early than wait until it becomes infected.

Because what matters isn't how the wound looks.

It's what may be happening underneath.

Because they're not just your pet.

They're family.

Family Matters.

If you need more information, book an appointment with an Amity vet. We're here to Empower You Through Education and help you become your pet's greatest advocate.