

Dog Smart

Toolkit for Professionals



Created by the Safe Kids Vermont
Dog Bite Prevention Committee



Dog Smart Toolkit for Professionals

Vermont is often considered one of the most dog-friendly states in the country. In fact, more than 1 in 4 households in Vermont include a dog. Dogs are often thought of as another ‘family member’ and included heavily in daily life. This is why it’s incredibly important to educate families and children on how to set dogs up for success rather than putting them at risk through unsafe and inappropriate interactions which may result in aggression.

Children are the most common victims of dog bites and are far more likely to be severely injured than adults. Over the past four years, UVM Medical Center Trauma Services has noted an alarming uptick in severe bites to infants and very young children under the age of 4. This is a shift in demographics for those severely injured from dog bites. Previously, school age children were the highest risk group for dog bites requiring trauma center level care. Most dog bites affecting young children occur during everyday activities while interacting with familiar dogs, and many of these bites are preventable.

It is said a message has to be heard three times before it’s remembered, and together we can make sure families expecting a child or who have young children hear the messages contained in this toolkit more than three times.

This toolkit will provide you with current resources for the Vermont Pediatric Dog Bite Prevention Campaign “Dog Smart”.

What is the Dog Smart Campaign?

The “Dog Smart” campaign is a collection of materials designed around key messaging for families. There are three key messages for expectant individuals and families with infants and five key messages for families with preschool or toddler age children. The messages are available in a variety of formats to best meet your needs. If the existing materials in the toolkit do not work with how you currently communicate with customers, patients, or the community, let us know.

Who can use this toolkit?

Whether you are a veterinarian, pediatrician, obstetrician, midwife, family practitioner, EMS, animal shelter or adoption program staff/volunteer, dog trainer, daycare provider, librarian, or anyone else who works with families or dogs, this toolkit can be a resource for you to engage and educate your audience. The messages in this toolkit are important for mitigating the risk of serious and potentially life-altering injuries that can occur when a dog bites an infant or preschool-aged child. Increased knowledge in the hands of parents, caregivers, and dog owners can allow us to create safe environments for both pets and children, which are crucial for the safety of our children and the welfare of dogs.

Once you have reviewed or implemented the toolkit, please take a few minutes to complete our brief evaluation survey.

Dog Smart Toolkit Evaluation



All materials for this toolkit are available by e-mailing VTSafeKids@UVMHealth.org.

Additional resources and Links

[BeBiteSmart](#)

[Stop the 77](#)

[Vermont Veterinary Medical Association Dog Bite Prevention Program](#)

[American Veterinary Medical Association Dog Bite Prevention](#)

Materials Available in Toolkit

Materials for the Dog Smart Campaign are focused on two high risk populations; infants and children between ages 1 and 4. Materials listed for Dogs & Babies are for expecting families and families with newborns. Materials labeled Dog-Smart are for children ages 1-4 and their caregivers. Materials will be available in additional languages in the coming months.

Flyers

There are two flyers available as part of the 2024 Vermont Dog Smart Campaign.



Dogs & Babies

This flyer highlights some ways to help you prepare your dog before your baby arrives for the upcoming change in the household and emphasizes the absolute need for active supervision of your dog around your baby.

Dog-Smart Kid Quiz

This flyer teaches kids to avoid situations which dogs may perceive as scary and/or threatening. By giving the dog a choice to come over for greeting, space when sleeping, eating, or playing with a toy and by avoiding close contact/rough play we can keep our kids and dogs safer.



Other Print Materials

The need for consistent messaging accessed in different ways is key to parent and caregiver education. For families with toddlers, we have provided additional print materials that can be requested from Safe Kids VT for you to distribute.



Dog-Smart Kid Quiz Magnet

This magnet is a great way to remind kids how to safely interact with dogs by using the same lessons as in the quiz. Perfect for the fridge door!

Dog-Smart Coloring Book

This coloring book includes 5 different scenes that focus on learning about safe dog interactions. The coloring pages can be printed out individually or as the complete coloring book. This is a fun activity for kids to complete in waiting rooms or to take with them.



Dog-Smart Bookmarks

These bookmarks recommend reviewed books that cover safe interactions with dogs in many situations. Reading together is a great way for both kids and adults to learn about safe interactions, which can include leaving dogs alone or giving the dog the choice to interact or not. The books recommended on the bookmark are also excellent choices for book displays around dog bite prevention.

Social Media and Digital Resources

Social media is an excellent tool for educating the public about dog bite prevention. Research indicates that 80% of Americans believe social media is effective in raising awareness about social issues, including child safety.

There are posts available for social media or waiting room televisions. Copies of materials can be requested by contacting VTSafeKids@UVMHealth.org. If needed, virtual materials may be customized upon request to meet branding requirements of your social media page, for example adding your logo.

Recommended hashtags for posts include #DogBitePrevention #DogSmart, #DogBiteSafety, #DogBitePreventionforKids #DogSafety, #DogSafetyTips, #DogsandKids



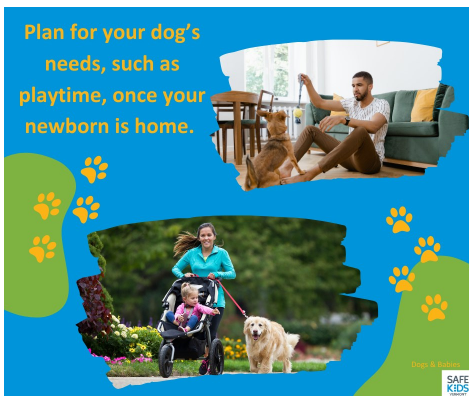
Dogs and Babies Slide Deck.

A set of 3 images covering the same tips on the Dogs & Babies flyer. This is key information for expectant families or families with newborns. Individual slides can be used for Facebook or the whole slide deck can be posted on Instagram.

Suggested Caption

(Long) Making sure your dog is comfortable with the necessary changes needed before your baby arrives will help your dog adjust to the new schedule and household structure. We do not want your dog to feel isolated, or confused about schedule changes. So working on these recommendations before your baby arrives will allow you and your dog to get used to this new routine.

(Short) Active supervision of your dog and baby when together cannot be overemphasized! It is central to the “new normal” routine for you and your dog.



Dog-Smart Campaign

A set of 5 images covering the key lessons of the Dog-Smart Campaign. This information is targeted at parents and caregivers of children between the ages of 1 and 4. Individual slides can be used for Facebook or the whole slide deck can be posted on Instagram.

Suggested Caption

(Long) Nothing is cuter than kids and dogs, but pictures of kids hugging or climbing on dogs aren't. Toddlers can unknowingly put themselves in danger by causing pain, startling, trapping, or threatening a dog. Parents and caregivers can practice safe behaviors and supervise toddlers as they learn how to safely interact with dogs.

(Short) How to interact with dogs is an important skill for toddlers to learn! Help them stay safe by following these simple behaviors and knowing when to leave dogs alone.





Dog-Smart Quiz Video

A 46 second video that includes a voiceover of the Dog-Smart Kid Quiz. This is a positive and upbeat video that demonstrates how parents and caregivers can do the quiz with their young children every day. Its perfect for social media posts, embedded on your website, or to play in your waiting room. [Watch it here!](#) A MP4 copy of the video is available upon request.

Suggested Caption

(Long) Is your Kid Dog-Smart? Try the Dog-Smart 5 Question Quiz with your kid everyday to help them learn safe dog behaviors. Remember, supervision is key as kids practice safe interactions with family dogs and dogs they meet. The Dog-Smart Quiz is the best way to keep not only your kid safe, but your dog safe too!

(Short) How to interact with dogs is an important skill for toddlers to learn! Help them stay safe by following these simple behaviors and knowing when to leave dogs alone.

Book Recommendation Choices

The following books were reviewed and approved by members of the Dog-Smart committee members for content.

- [Doggy Do's and Don'ts](#) by Emily D Levine DVM Dacvb and Sarah Rachel Glazer
- [Porter & Midge Paws for Safety](#) by Giselle Nevada and Jennie Chen
- [Ask the Dog](#) by Joanne Hinds
- [Please Don't Hug Me](#) by Cathy Acampora
- [May I Pet Your Dog?](#) by Stephanie Calmenson
- [Don't Lick the Dog](#) by Wendy Wahman

Members of the Dog Bite Committee:

CHAMPLAIN VALLEY CANINE RESCUE

Champlain Valley Canine Rescue strives to rescue and save a wide range of animals. We are a completely volunteer-based organization and are grateful for our many foster homes as well as for the volunteers who help with transports and grooming.

NORTH COUNTRY ANIMAL LEAGUE

North Country Animal League's mission is to promote compassionate and responsible relationships between humans and animals.

SAFE KIDS VERMONT

Safe Kids Vermont is a coalition of individuals and organizations across the state of Vermont dedicated to keeping children and teens healthy and safe by preventing injury.

UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

The University of Vermont Children's Hospital provides high-quality, child-friendly care with a patient and family-centered approach that improves the health of children throughout Vermont and northern New York.

VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

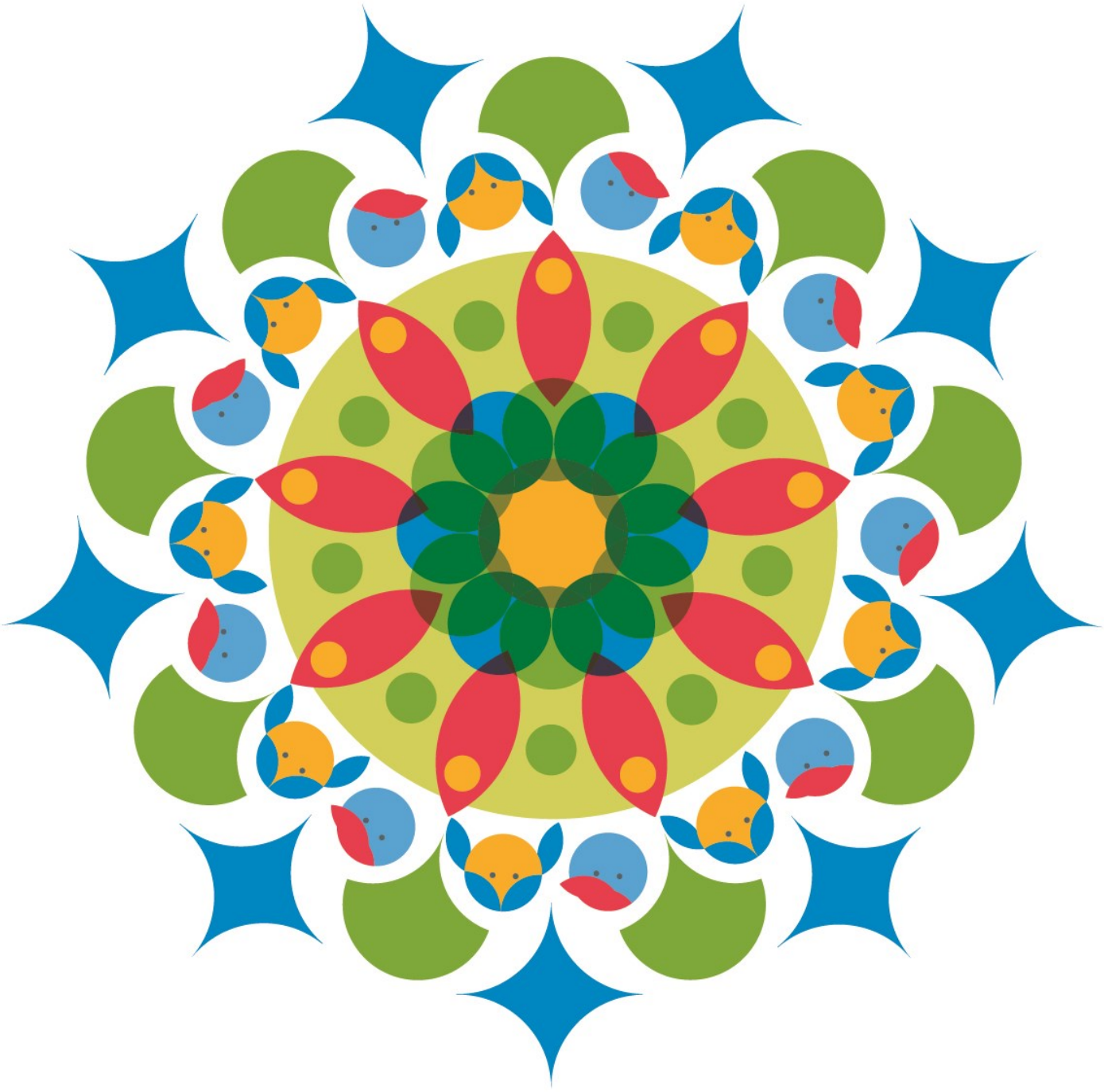
With a focus on prevention, the Vermont Department of Health offers many programs and initiatives to help Vermonters live fuller, healthier lives from birth through old age.

VERMONT VETERINARY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

The Vermont Veterinary Medical Association (VVMA) is a professional organization of 380 veterinarians dedicated to compassionate animal care and quality medicine.



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For Questions, e-mail

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