

the expiration date on the kit and to replace an outdated one. They should determine whether a nurse is available at the school and find out what the school policy is regarding administration of drugs. If a school nurse is not present, someone at the school should be designated to inject the epinephrine in case of an emergency.

Pet and Wild Animal Bites

Animal bites are common in childhood. Wild animal bites are discussed in relation to rabies in [Chapter 27](#). The present discussion is directed primarily toward dog bites, because most animal bites to children are caused by dogs. Cat bites are less frequent, although cat scratches are extremely common (see [Cat Scratch Disease, Chapter 6](#)).

Most dog or cat injuries are to the upper extremities. Small children are likely to be bitten or scratched on the head, face, and neck because they tend to put their heads near the animal's head and flail their arms rather than protecting their heads. Most dogs involved are owned by the family of the victim or by a neighbor. Injuries vary in intensity from small puncture wounds to complete evulsion of tissue that is associated with significant crush injury.

Therapeutic Management

General wound care consists of rinsing the wound with copious amounts of saline or lactated Ringer solution under pressure via a large syringe and of washing the surrounding skin with mild soap. A clean pressure dressing is applied, and the extremity is elevated if the wound is bleeding. Medical evaluation is advised because of the danger of tetanus and rabies, although dogs in most urban areas must be immunized against rabies. Bites from wild animals, such as bats, raccoons, foxes, and skunks, are potentially dangerous.

Prophylactic antibiotics are indicated for puncture wounds and wounds in areas where infection could result in cosmetic (face) or functional impairment (hand). Extensive lacerations are debrided and may be loosely sutured to allow drainage in the event of infection. Tetanus toxoid is administered according to standard guidelines (see [Chapter 6](#)), and rabies protocol is followed in case of a wild animal bite (see [Rabies, Chapter 27](#)). Injuries to poorly vascularized areas, such as the hands, are more likely to become