

## Safety With Animals

### Getting a Pet

A pet can be a good friend to your toddler and teach them valuable social and emotional skills.

Prepare your child by:

- showing them how to be gentle and speak quietly to animals
- teaching them how animals look when they're irritated
- teaching them to wash well after touching animals
- keeping dry pet food out of your child's reach

Prepare your pet by:

- getting it immunized
- training it not to bite or scratch
- not keeping wild animals, including ferrets, as pets



#### TRY THIS

Wait until your child is 5 or 6 to get a pet so they'll be old enough to be gentle with it.



#### BE AWARE

Children under 5 shouldn't touch turtles, snakes or other reptiles. These animals carry germs that can make your toddler very sick.

### Being Around Other Animals

Teach your child to stay away from animals they don't know, and to ask if it's okay before going near someone else's pet. Stay close by, even if you trust the animal. And don't be afraid to ask dog owners to use a leash.



#### VISITORS

##### What You Can Do

Start with your dog on a leash when you're visiting a home with a toddler.



#### HOW TO

##### Deal with animal bites and scratches

1. Clean the wound well with soap and water.
2. See your health care provider or call HealthLink BC at 8-1-1 if:
  - the animal isn't yours and it could be sick
  - the wound is serious
  - the wound doesn't heal well
  - your child's immunizations (especially tetanus) aren't up to date



#### MEDICAL EMERGENCY

Call your health care provider or HealthLink BC at 8-1-1 if your child has **contact with a bat**, even if there's no bite. Although it's rare in B.C., some bats can carry rabies.



#### FAMILY STORY

My 11-month-old was scared of dogs after a big one knocked him down. I asked a friend to bring over his small, quiet dog while I kept my son on my lap. Over time, his fear went away.

