

CONSIDERATIONS:

1. Staff has a right to feel safe when visiting patient's homes. If pets make a clinician feel unsafe, the clinician should ask the animal be secured while the clinician is in the home in a way that enables the clinician to feel comfortable.
2. Unsecured pets can pose an infection risk to patients during certain types of care. They can also contaminate clinicians' bags and supplies. If the clinician feels that contamination is a risk during care, the clinician should ask that the animal be secured, to eliminate the infection/contamination risk.
3. Pet animals can be secured in different ways appropriate to the situation, such as by placing the animal in a cage or in a separate room behind a closed door.
4. Every year, millions of Americans are bitten by pet dogs. Even "friendly" dogs bite unpredictably if they perceive a threat to their owners or their territory. Any strange dog is a potential risk. Clinicians are at risk for being bitten by dogs.

EQUIPMENT:

None

PROCEDURE:

1. At Admission to Care:
 - a. Assess environment for safety hazards, including hazards to visiting staff. Hazards can include pets
 - b. Develop a plan with the patient about when, how and where the animal should be secured during visits
2. On Planning Visits to Patients with Pets:
 - a. Review communication about pets
 - b. Call patient and alert for need to have pet secured
3. On Visits:

Ask patient to secure pet i before entering home
4. It is expected for all staff to assure consistency with this procedure

5. If a Dog/Animal Appears Threatening:
 - a. Recognize signs that the dog/animal might attack:
 - i. Tail high and stiff
 - ii. Ears up
 - iii. Growling, showing teeth
 - b. Do not turn away. Do not run away. Do not make eye contact with the animal. Do not scream or yell
 - c. Slowly put something between you and animal, e.g. visiting bag
 - d. Stay as still as possible and avert eyes, until dog loses interest; back away very slowly until the dog is out of sight
 - e. If knocked down, roll into a ball, face rolled into chest, hands over ears, shoulders over hands
6. If Bitten by a Dog/Animal:
 - a. Depending on severity/advice of clinical supervisor:
 - i. Wash wound with soap and water
 - ii. Obtain urgent medical attention

AFTER CARE:

1. If threatened or bitten/injured by animal, complete an incident report
2. Communicate:
 - a. Communicate with supervisor and all staff scheduled to visit about animal's presence and plan for when/how/where to secure animal
 - b. Alert supervisor to any incidents with animal
 - c. Communicate presence of pets in the patient record to alert other clinicians

REFERENCE:

- American Veterinary Medical Association (2010). Dog Bite Prevention. Schaumburg, IL: Author
- CDC (2009). Dog Bite Prevention. Retrieved April 29, 2012 from <http://www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Dog-Bites/biteprevention.html>
- OSHA (2007). Rescue of Animals by Disaster Relief Personnel: Quick Card. Retrieved April 29, 2012 from http://www.osha.gov/Publications/rescuers_of_animals.pdf