



KEY FINDINGS SUMMARY

When Dog Bites Happen: A Data-Driven Guide for Virginia Families

HEADLINE FINDING

80% of dog bite injuries occur at home, and between 53–99% involve a dog the victim already knows. The threat is not strays or unfamiliar animals — it is the family pet, a relative's dog, or a neighbor's animal.

Sources: Heliyon (2019), JAMA (1998), BMJ Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health (2018)

FOUR KEY DIMENSIONS

 WHEN BITES OCCUR • Peak months: June–July (school break correlation) • Peak hours: 5:00–8:00 PM daily • 4% increase per temp SD; 11% per UV SD	 WHERE BITES OCCUR • 80.2% at or near the victim's home • 73% of child bites target face/head/neck • Children ages 5–9: highest rate of any group
 EVERYDAY TRIGGERS • Eating, sleeping, confined — not aggression • 70–76% of biting dogs are intact males • Multi-dog homes: 5x higher adult bite risk	 AFTER A BITE • 3–18% infection rate without treatment • 395,000 annual ER visits nationally (2022) • Avg insurance claim: \$58,545 (2023)

VIRGINIA LEGAL FRAMEWORK

One-Bite Rule Owner liable only if they knew or should have known the dog was dangerous. Prior lunging, snapping, or complaints can establish knowledge.	Contributory Negligence Virginia is 1 of 4 states where even 1% victim fault can bar recovery entirely. Documentation is critical from day one.	Leash Law = Auto Liability Butler v. Frieden (1967): Violating a local leash ordinance is negligence per se. Statute of limitations: 2 years.
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Full case study with 23 numbered references available at TheParrishLawFirm.com | January 2026