



Apr 2008

# Hospitalizations and Emergency Dept. Visits for Dog Bites Children Aged 0-17 Years, Miami-Dade County, 2005

## Miami-Dade County Injury Facts

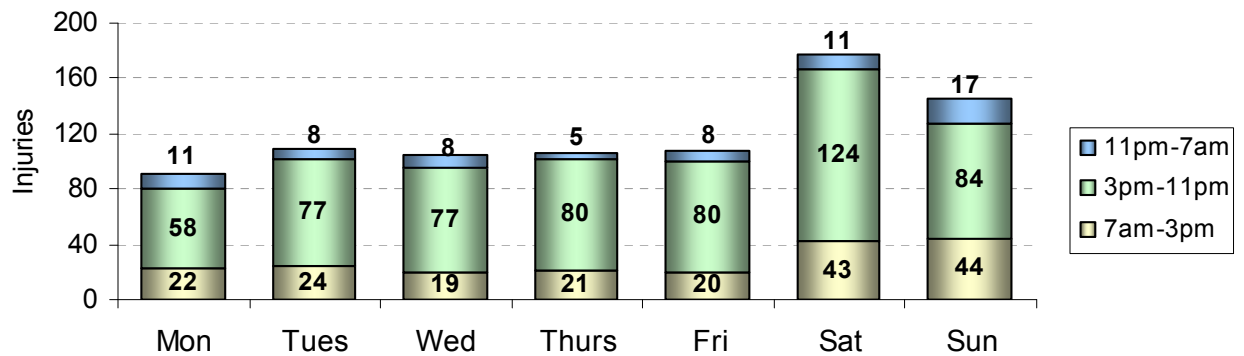


Dog bites to children are a largely preventable public health problem. In most cases the dog that bit the child was their own dog or the dog of a neighbor and the bite occurred at someone's home. This indicates that most bites to children are preventable through supervision and education of children and families.

In 2005, there were 841 emergency department (ED) visits and 9 hospitalizations due to dog bites to Miami-Dade County children aged 0-17 years. No deaths occurred from dog bites to this age group during 2005.

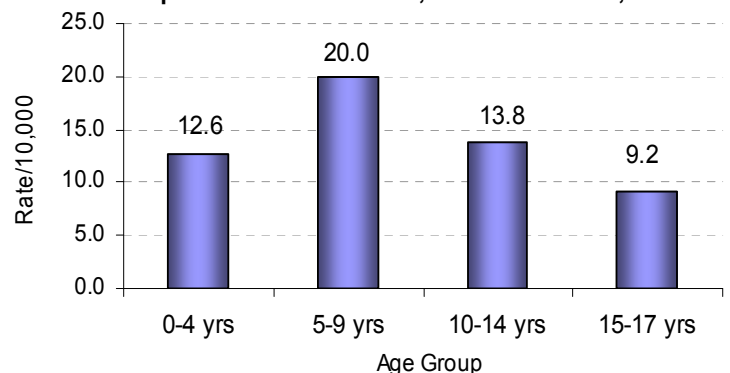
- Nonfatal dog bites occurred most frequently on the weekend (38% of all cases) and most commonly occurred in the afternoon and evening hours of 3pm-11pm each day of the week (69% of cases).

**Day of Week & Hour of Day for Dog Bite Incidents  
Residents Aged 0-17 Yrs., Miami-Dade Co., 2005**

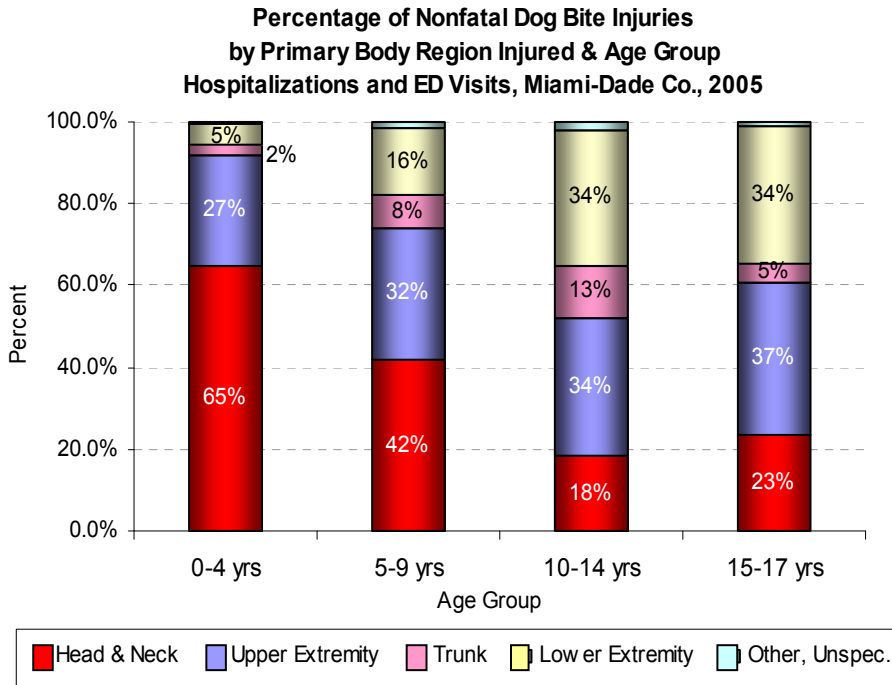


- Nonfatal dog bites occurred most often to children under 14 years of age. Children aged 5-9 years had the highest rate of nonfatal dog bites in 2005.
- Male children suffered 61% of nonfatal dog bites and had a dog bite rate nearly 50% higher than female children.
- There were no racial or ethnic differences for dog bite rates among county children.

**Dog Bite Rate per 10,000 Residents by Age Group  
Hospitalized and ED Visits, Miami-Dade Co., 2005**



## Body Region Injured by Dog Bite Injuries

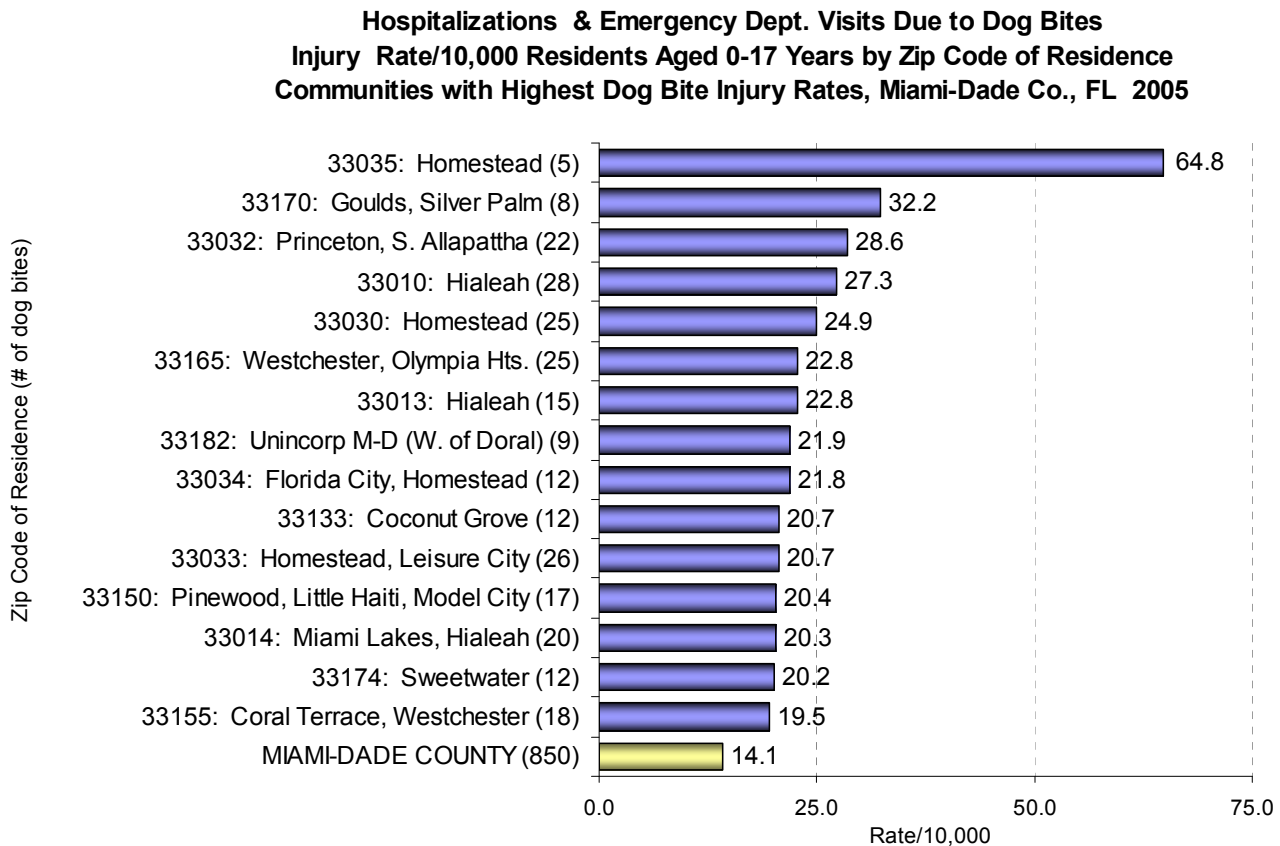


- Two out of every three nonfatal dog bite injuries to children aged 0-4 years were to the child’s face or head.

- As children aged, the percentage of dog bite injuries to the face or head declined and injuries to the lower extremity increased.

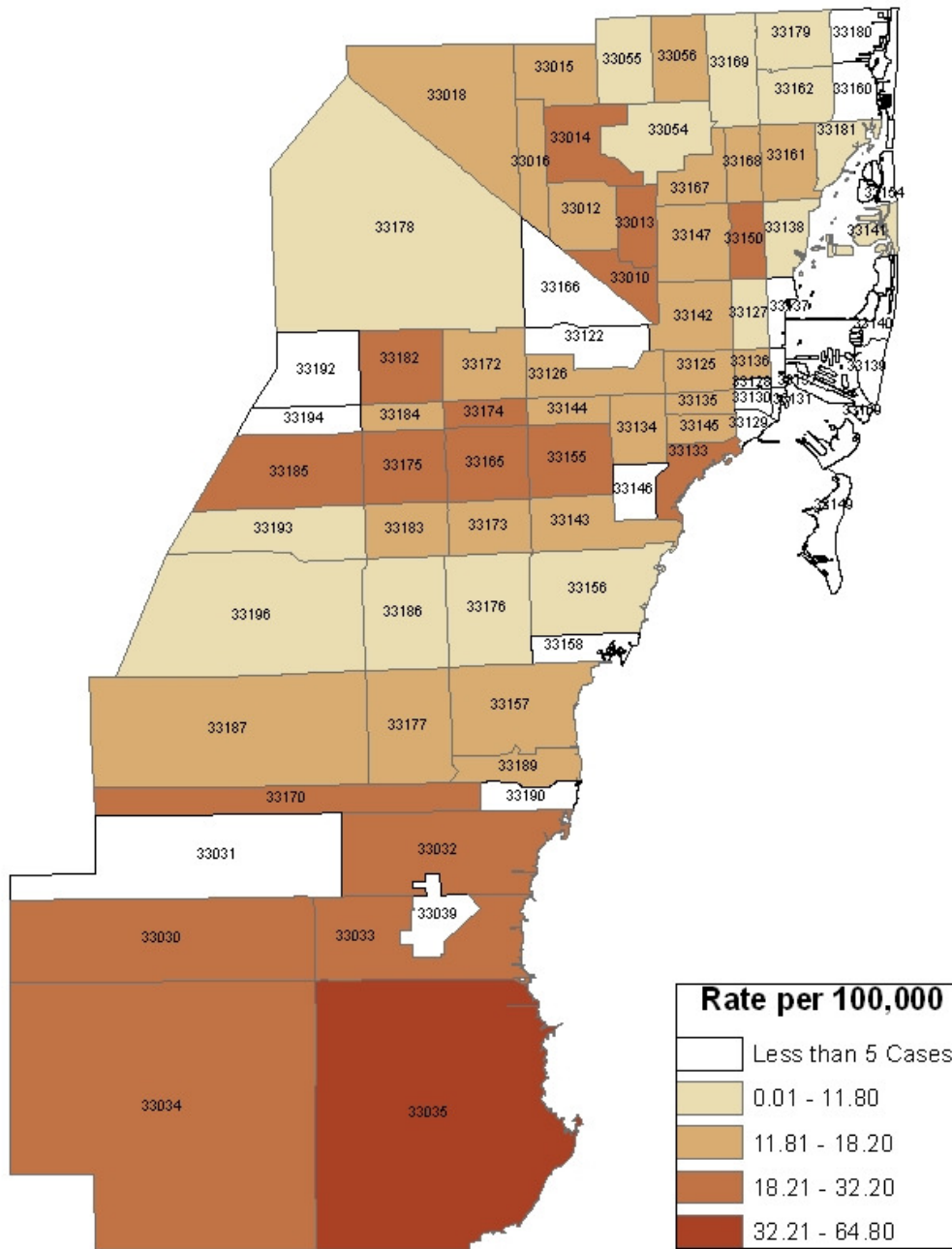
- 78% of dog bite injuries were open wounds and another 17% were superficial cuts and contusions.

## Residence of Children Injured by Dog Bites



Residence of Children Injured by Dog Bites

**Dog Bite Injury Rate/10,000 by Zip Code of Residence  
Hospitalizations and Emergency Dept. Visits to Residents Aged 0-17 Years,  
Miami-Dade Co., FL, 2005**



## Preventing Dog Bites

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention lists several ways children can reduce their chances of being bitten (1).

### Teach Children Basic Safety Around Dogs and Review Regularly:

- Do not approach an unfamiliar dog. Do not run from a dog and scream.
- Remain motionless (e.g., "be still like a tree") when approached by an unfamiliar dog.
- If knocked over by a dog, roll into a ball and lie still (e.g., "be still like a log").
- Do not play with a dog unless supervised by an adult.
- Do not pet a dog without allowing it to see and sniff you first.
- Immediately report stray dogs or dogs displaying unusual behavior to an adult.
- If bitten, immediately report the bite to an adult.

### Things to Consider Before You Get a Dog:

- Consult with a professional (e.g., veterinarian) to learn about suitable breeds of dogs for your household.
- Be sensitive to cues that a child is fearful or apprehensive about a dog and, if so, delay acquiring a dog.
- Spend time with a dog before buying or adopting it. Use caution when bringing a dog into the home of an infant or toddler. Never leave infants or young children alone with any dog.
- Spay/neuter virtually all dogs (this frequently reduces aggressive tendencies).
- Do not play aggressive games with your dog (e.g., wrestling).
- Properly socialize and train any dog entering the household. Teach the dog submissive behaviors (e.g., rolling over to expose abdomen and relinquishing food without growling).

Source: Centers for Disease Control & Prevention Injury Center,  
<http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/duip/biteprevention.htm>

#### Produced by the Miami-Dade County Injury Surveillance System

Data Sources: Hospital Discharge & Emergency Department Data

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