
Human Bites

Human bites can be more serious than animal bites because they often become infected. Many severe human bites occur during fights when a fist strikes someone's teeth. These bites may damage tissue and tendons deep in the hand. Children may bite each other during play or fights.

When to go to the emergency room (ER)

Any human bite that breaks the skin can become infected. There is also the risk of damage to tendons and joints. For these reasons, seek medical care right away.

What to expect in the ER

- The bite will be carefully cleaned and inspected.
- X-rays may be done to check for injuries.
- Infection can occur from a human bite. Antibiotics may be given to help prevent this. If the wound is already severely infected, you may be admitted to the hospital. There you'll get antibiotics through a vein in your arm.
- For severe tissue or joint damage, especially of the hand, you may be referred to a plastic or orthopedic surgeon.

Follow-up care

Follow-up care is crucial for human bites. Your healthcare provider will check how well you're healing and decide whether you need further treatment.

When to call your healthcare provider

Call your healthcare provider right away if you notice signs of infection including:

- Fever over 100.4°F (38°C) or higher, or as directed by your healthcare provider
- Increased redness, swelling, or tenderness near the bite
- Pus draining from the wound