BITES-HUMAN

Children will sometimes bite other children, as well as some adults. Cutting knuckles on someone’s teeth, as in a fist fight should also be treated as a human bite. Human bites (especially those on the hands, over joints, face and lip, skull penetration) can lead to serious infection.

History:

- Time/location and circumstances surrounding bite.
- Date of last hepatitis B and tetanus vaccine of person bitten.
- Underlying medical conditions that would predispose client to infection.

Assessment:

- Assess for:
  - A bite mark or any break in skin and/or bleeding.
  - Any swelling and discoloration, including size and appearance.

Treatment:

- Using standard precautions, stop bleeding.
- Hold direct pressure to the wound for 5 minutes or until bleeding stops.
- Wash affected area with soap and water.
- If skin is broken, apply antibiotic ointment to help prevent infection and apply clean dressing.
- If in a shelter, re-evaluate in 48 hours.
- If tissue has been bitten off (ear, nose, digit) wrap the tissue in clean dressing, place in a plastic bag, submerge bag in cool water and send tissue with EMS.

Refer to Primary Care Provider:

- All bites that break the skin within 24 hours.
- Any bites that show signs of infection (redness, warmth, swelling, pain with movement).
- Anyone bitten requiring a Hepatitis B vaccine or tetanus vaccine.

Call EMS:

- All bites with significant or poorly controlled bleeding.
- Bites on the face/neck or with major tissue damage.
- All bites that result in tissue being bitten off.

Reference
