

Mt San Antonio College –
RVT Program Bite/Scratch Policy

Standard Operating Procedure for Animal Bites and Scratches and Other Animal-Related Injuries

The intent of this standard operating procedure (SOP) is to describe how to treat animal related injuries. This SOP is intended for use by all students who handle animals.

Information on reporting of bite and scratch related injuries can be found on the Mt SAC Veterinary Technology website under the **Student Information tab**: www.mtsac.edu/vettech and it is discussed during RVT Program Orientation.

All animal related bite and scratch injuries must be reported to your supervising professor. You must then contact Mt SAC Student Health Services at 909-274-4000 to report the injury and be directed for any medical care if needed. If you have any animal-related injury that you feel is an emergency, call Mt SAC Campus Police at 909-274-5555 for immediate assistance or 911 if the emergency is life threatening.

An animal bite or exposure is defined as having one's skin pierced or abraded by animal's teeth or claws, or by animal saliva or tissue coming in contact with abraded skin, eyes, or mucus membranes. Bites and scratches are not merely a concern of physical injury, but there is also the potential of contracting zoonotic disease or allergic reactions.

Bite and Scratch Prevention

- * Species-specific animal handling techniques are taught by the professor of each class, veterinary staff and the animal facility management staff.
- * If possible, direct handling of wild animals or any animals suspected of being infected should be avoided by using tongs, bite gloves, squeeze cages, shields, or other protective equipment.
- * Animals known to be aggressive should always be handled by a minimum of two people.

Bite and Scratch Treatment

- * A First-Aid kit is readily available in the location of all class instruction areas
- * The facility manager or their designee is responsible for maintaining the first-aid kit and checking the contents expiration dates.
- * Contents must include:
 - Surgical scrubs impregnated with antiseptic soap
 - Sterile gauze pads
 - Adhesive tape
 - Band-aids
 - Topical antibiotic ointment

For minor injuries involving rodent bites:

- Let the wound slightly bleed under running water and gently scrub with a surgical sponge and antiseptic soap. Wash the wound until visible dirt and debris are gone.
- Apply gauze and firm pressure to control bleeding. Apply a band-aid if the wound is superficial and not bleeding.

- Thoroughly rinse exposed mucous membranes under running water or by using the eye wash station.
- Notify your supervisor or professor so he/she can assess the wound and determine if a physician should be consulted.
- Contact Mt SAC Student Health Services at 909-274-4000 to report the injury and to be directed for any medical care if needed.

For dog bites:

- If you are bitten by a dog, clean the wound under running water and gently scrub with a surgical sponge and antiseptic soap for at least 15 minutes. Wash the wound until visible dirt and debris are gone.
- Immediately notify your supervisor or professor and contact Mt SAC Student Health Services at 909-274-4000 to report the injury and to be directed for any medical care if needed.
- Mt SAC Student Health Services will notify the LA County Animal Control of the dog bite and that department will examine the incident and the dog's health history and determine the required action.
- The Mt SAC RVT Program maintains health records and vaccination histories for all dogs maintained on campus.

For all other species bites:

- Rabbits: Rabbits contain few infectious pathogens. Of concern are scratches that can be inflicted with their strong hind legs and sharp claws or from bites. Secondary infection with common bacteria can result. Perform the first aid procedures as needed and seek medical consultation for severe or infected wounds.
- Pigs: Bites from pigs present a risk similar to that from a dog and the same first aid procedures should be followed.
- Cats: Bites from cats present a risk similar to that from a dog and the same first aid procedures should be followed.
- Rats: Rats are bred to exclude all zoonotic agents. Therefore, there is limited concern for disease from these research rats. There is, however, always concern about secondary infections that can occur with bites and scratches. Common skin, intestinal, and soil bacteria present on you or the animal can infect the scratch or bite wound and cause these secondary infections. Thus, handle all mice with care, always perform first aid, and seek medical consultation for severe wounds that appear to be infected.
- Ruminants (cattle and sheep): Ruminants contain few infectious pathogens. Secondary infection with common bacteria can result. Perform the first aid procedures as needed and seek medical consultation for severe or infected wounds. The Mt SAC RVT Program maintains health records and vaccination histories for all ruminants maintained on campus.
- Horses: Horses contain few infectious pathogens. Perform the first aid procedures as needed and seek medical consultation for severe or infected wounds. The Mt SAC RVT Program maintains health records and vaccination histories for all horses maintained on campus.