

Boy mauled by 'toilet paper' dog

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A Christchurch mother is calling on toilet paper giant Purex to change its advertising after her four-year-old son was mauled by a shar pei dog - the breed of dog that is the Purex Rolly mascot.

Jacob Stark suffered serious facial injuries and underwent surgery on Sunday night after he was attacked by the dog while playing at a friend's house.

He suffered cuts and bruising to his lip, cheek, forehead and back in the attack.

Jacob's mother, Racheal Stark, said yesterday her son had approached the dog to pat it because he had been lured into thinking shar peis were a safe breed through the Purex advertising.

"I've already phoned Purex and put in a complaint because the way I see it, it's almost false advertising," she said. "Jacob thought this dog was a cute, cuddly little thing and it attacked him."

Jacob had been playing at his friend's grandmother's house when the attack happened. "He told me he walked out the back door and leant down to pat the dog and it just went for him," Stark said.

Jacob was rushed to hospital and stayed overnight after surgery to stitch up his face.

Christchurch City Council animal control team leader Mark Vincent said last night the dog was being held while an investigation was completed.

Stark said the incident should serve as a warning to parents and dog owners that no breed was safe.

"Other breeds get all the media attention," she said. "I just wanted to get it out there that these dogs are dangerous. They were originally Chinese fighting dogs and they're not the cuddly things you think."

Jacob spent yesterday on his couch at home, and doctors say he will be off preschool for 10 days.

Purex spokesman Grant Freeman said last night the company sympathised with the Stark family but could not be held responsible for the behaviour of all shar pei dogs. "Any animal, if you approach it in the wrong way, will attack. And a lot of companies use animals in their advertising, and most of them can be vicious as well."

Purex would continue using the dog. "Our intention is not to promote the dog but purely to emphasise the softness of his rolls and his fur."

THE PRESS

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