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# Child recovers from dog attack

By ANTHONY LANE  
 Star-Tribune staff writer Thursday, March 09, 2006

Mark Pillar wiped carefully around freshly applied stitches as he tried to remove evidence of a recent Popsicle from his daughter's face.

"We got up to 56 stitches" before losing count, Pillar said, speaking at Wyoming Medical Center shortly after his 22-month-old was moved from intensive care to the pediatric unit. A dog's bite on Monday left a pattern of cuts to Emma Rose Pillar's forehead, chin and other parts of her head.

A scan also showed that the girl suffered a small concussion, but Mark Pillar and his wife pointed out that things could have been worse.

"We got lucky," Angell Pillar said.

The Pillars spoke about the attack on their daughter Tuesday afternoon. They hope to see more attention put on the subject of dog bites in the community where they've lived for about a half-century.

"Everyone I've talked to knows someone who's been bitten," Angell Pillar said.

There were nearly 400 dog bites reported throughout Natrona County in 2005, according to Sulzen, managing director of Metro Animal Control. While that number is significantly higher than the previous year, Sulzen said, animal control officers consistently find that about 80 percent of the bites are provoked.

Breeds that cause problems also vary from year to year, Sulzen said. Cocker spaniels have been a common breed in the list of reported dog bites in the past. Border collies and heeler dogs could now be at the top of the list, Sulzen said, chiefly because they are popular.

Pit bulls, which have been outlawed in some communities in response to a perception that they are dangerous, have not been a particular problem in the area, Sulzen said.

The dog that attacked Emma Pillar was reportedly a pit bull mix. The Pillars said they hope the dog might be developed to help families avoid the situation in which they find themselves.

Angell Pillar said she was only visiting the home of a family friend for a few minutes on Monday afternoon when the attack happened. The dog had been confined to a basement room when it apparently slipped out, Pillar said, biting her daughter as the girl walked to pick up a balloon.

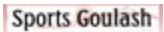
"All it took was seconds," Angell Pillar said.



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It took doctors about three hours to stitch Emma Pillar's wounds. Her parents said they are results of rabies tests to see if their daughter, who has already received a first round of the will need more shots.

They hope to leave the hospital today.

The Pillars say the dog that attacked their daughter has already been put to sleep. Still, the expressed shock about its strength and the suddenness of its attack.

"It went straight for her face," Mark Pillar said. "To me, that's like a kill shot."

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