

News

Family's husky mauls infant in Blooming Grove

By John Sullivan

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BLOOMING GROVE — A month-old infant was mauled by a family dog last week when the mother stepped away for a moment to heat up a baby bottle, authorities said.

The infant, Isaiah Ayala, is recovering at Westchester Medical Center, where he is expected to be released in a day or two, said Jean Hudson, Orange County health commissioner. Hudson said her department received notice of the attack from officials at Westchester Medical Center Friday, three days after the attack occurred.

Blooming Grove police were not notified of the attack until the health department called, a sergeant said. It was not clear Monday why it took so long for the attack to be reported.

Blooming Grove police are investigating along with the town Animal Control Officer Melissa Veraldo.

Hudson said she was told by the family that the dog, a husky, attacked Isaiah when he began to cry. The animal does not have a history of violence toward children, she said the family told her.

The attack left the baby with "significant bites" to the abdomen, Hudson said. The dog remains in confinement for now, and its rabies shots have been found up to date.

Veraldo was expected to visit the home of the victim's family on Duell Avenue Monday to get more details about the attack, she said. An animal behaviorist will check the dog for any psychological issues.

"The family said they believe the dog was trying to help the baby," Veraldo said.