

## WHEN CATS BITE

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Those who know me will be very surprised to think I would not listen to my husband, Jeff when he said not to bring home a stray cat that I found at the lake. He was the cutest cat ever, a Hemingway Cat; which gets their name from Ernest Hemingway's love of the polydactyl cat. A polydactyl cat has a congenital physical anomaly that causes the cat to be born with more than the usual number of toes on one or more of its paws. My 9 year old granddaughter, Madi was with me during the decision making process of whether or not to take the cat or leave it at the lake. After carefully thinking over the situation and receiving the prodding of Madi there was no way I was heeding his advice that our dog, Rosie would not be a fan of the new addition to our family, which we'll refer to as Ernie from this point.

The ride home went very well, with Ernie being a fan of riding in a car. He sat up on my shoulder and looked out the window, eager to know where his new family was taking him. He purred the entire trip home. This is when my decision making skills began to take a dive. I opted to let Rosie and Ernie get acquainted. Ernie began to hiss and Rosie, who is an Australian Cattle Dog began to leap at him. This is when I opted to pick up Ernie and hold him at a height Rosie could not reach him. Not a good idea, Ernie bit me very hard on my left thumb and bolted to climb the nearest tree, with Rosie close behind. My thumb was bleeding and throbbing. As a nurse I knew I needed to go inside and rinse off my thumb with mild soap and water, while gently pressing on the wound to cause some bleeding to continue and help move the bacteria from the wound. My thumb immediately began to swell to about 2 times its normal size, become red and I became slightly nauseous from the pain. It was late in the afternoon on a Friday and I opted to make a trip to the Urgent Care, as I was unsure what my thumb would look like by Monday. Madi accompanied me to the Urgent Care, and gave me the following sage advice, "You shouldn't have listened to me Memaw, I am just a kid you are the adult."

Upon arriving at the urgent care, and wondering if I was overreacting, I was surprised by the reaction I actually received. I was told it was a good thing I had come in and did not wait until Monday for treatment, as cat bites are the worse. I was given a tetanus shot and started on a 10 day dose of antibiotics. I was also told to return if any signs of infection began to develop.

I decided to research cat bites and found that according to the Cleveland Clinic you should see a physician within 8 hours to reduce your risk of infection. The Mayo Clinic states 1 in 3 patients are hospitalized. The World Health Organization states female adults have the highest rate of cat bites; with almost all of these bites being self-reported as a provoked bite.



**I also found that cat bites are so dangerous due to the fact that they have fangs. The fangs are sharp and can penetrate very deeply into your skin.**

**After Madi and I returned from Urgent Care Ernie appeared in our back yard. I made the decision to take him back to his home at the lake, as I did not feel Rosie and Ernie would ever be friends. He seemed to enjoy the car ride home. I now consider him my Lake Cat and plan on checking on him from time to time.**