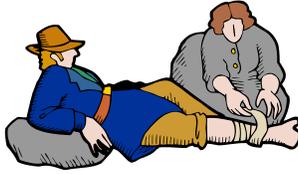


MCLA Health Services

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Self Care Sheet

Cuts, Scrapes and Scratches Wound Care

A wound is a break or opening in the skin. Wounds are mostly caused by a cut, scrape or some sort of injury. Minor cuts and scrapes can be treated by yourself, but deep cuts, puncture wounds and bites need to be seen by a health care professional. The goal is for the wound to heal without scarring and to prevent infections.

Home Care and Prevention

- ⇒ **Stop the bleeding.** Minor cuts and scrapes usually stop bleeding on their own. If they don't apply gentle pressure with a clean cloth or bandage, if possible elevate the wound. Don't keep checking to see if the bleeding has stopped because this may damage or dislodge the clot that is forming. Do not remove the bandage until after 10 minutes and if bleeding soaks through bandage apply a new one on top of the old bandage.
- ⇒ **Clean the wound.** Use soap and running water to clean the wound. It is not necessary to use hydrogen peroxide or rubbing alcohol to clean wounds.
- ⇒ You can **apply a thin layer of an antibiotic cream or ointment** such as Neosporin to keep the surface moist and discourage infection for the first 1-3 days. Some people can be sensitive to some of the ingredients in the ointment or cream and develop a rash. If a rash develops stop the ointment and seek medical advice.
- ⇒ **Cover the wound** with a bandage that will keep the wound clean at least for the first few days of healing then exposure to air will speed wound healing. **Change bandages daily or when it becomes wet or dirty.**
- ⇒ **Regular hand washing** or use of alcohol based hand sanitizer especially before and after caring for a wound.
- ⇒ **Scabs are the body's way of bandaging itself.** They protect wounds from dirt. Leave them alone and do not pick them. They fall off by themselves when the time is right.
- ⇒ Avoid using other people's towels, washcloths, razors, brushes, combs and toothbrushes. Avoid touching other people's wounds.
- ⇒ Don't go barefoot, especially outdoors.
- ⇒ Don't walk and text. Looking where you are going prevents falls.

How do I know if the wound needs medical attention?

- ⇒ **If the wound is deep or the edges are wide, jagged or gape open.**
- ⇒ **If the bleeding does not stop after 20 minutes or the blood is spurting.**
- ⇒ **When signs of infection develop: the area becomes red, warm, painful, or swollen. Red streaks form from the wound.**
- ⇒ **Pimples, rashes, boils or wounds that start to have a pus like discharge.**
- ⇒ **Fever.**
- ⇒ **The wound is on your face.**
- ⇒ **If given an antibiotic it is important to start the medicine as soon as it is prescribed. Take exactly as prescribed and finish all of the medicine, even if you are feeling better in a few days.**
- ⇒ **If you have a deep cut or puncture wound and you are not sure if you have had a Tetanus vaccine in the past 5 years.**

Follow up at Health Services for further evaluation and treatment or if you are concerned seek more immediate medical care.