

Skin Tears



A skin tear is a separation or peeling back of the outer layer of skin. It looks like an open blister or a loose flap of skin.

Who is at Risk?

Those with fragile skin, especially the elderly; users of wheelchairs; those with visual, mental or sensory impairment; and those needing total care.

Causes

Pulling movements on the arms or legs, rubbing or sliding the skin, removal of tape, bumping into objects, falls, or no apparent reason

Care

- Wash your hands for at least 15 seconds
- Gently rinse the wound with clean water
- Pat or air dry
- If there is a loose piece of skin still attached, put it back over the wound
- Cover with a nonstick, non-adhesive pad
- Use gauze wrap or tubular bandage to hold the pad in place
- Do not use tape on the skin
- Change the bandage if it becomes soiled or soaked with drainage; carefully remove bandage, rinse the wound gently, and apply a new bandage.

Prevention

Carefully handle those with fragile skin. Avoid harsh or pulling movements; use proper methods to transfer, turn, lift, or position. Pad side rails, arm or leg supports. Wear long sleeves or pants. Regularly use a moisturizing cream or lotion on the skin.

This pamphlet has been brought to you by the Association for the Advancement of Wound Care (AAWC) through the volunteer support and clinical expertise of the AAWC Public Awareness Task Force.

Our Mission

AAWC is a non-profit, multidisciplinary Association that gives its members the opportunity, through numerous Association benefits and leadership opportunities, to build a collaborative community to facilitate optimal care for those who suffer with wounds.

Did you know?

AAWC has a variety of membership and contribution options. Categories of membership exist for healthcare providers and their facilities, but also for wound care patients and their caregivers.

Wound care patients need a voice!

Become a part of AAWC's Advocacy Team!

Join AAWC today, and encourage your healthcare providers to become members.

For questions about AAWC Membership or to make a charitable contribution, please call or visit:

Toll Free: 866-AAWC-999
Outside of the US: 610-560-0484

www.aawcone.org

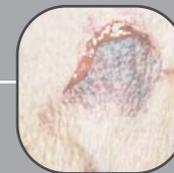
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The ABC's of Skin and Wound Care

A Guide for Treating Minor Wounds for Patients and their Caregivers



Abrasions



Bruises



Cuts



Injuries occur in everyday life, and if you are active in sports you may experience even more injuries. An abrasion is one of the injuries almost everyone has felt. An abrasion occurs when skin is rubbed away, like a skinned knee or a road rash. Abrasions can be painful and bleeding starts immediately after the skin is broken. With good care, minor abrasions heal in a short period of time.

Care

- Wash your hands for 15 seconds, and dry them with a clean cloth.
- Stop the bleeding by pressing a clean cloth against the wound.
- After you have stopped the bleeding, rinse the wound with large amounts of clean water.
- Do not use iodine solutions, alcohol, or soap.
- Gently remove small pieces of dirt with a clean, moist cloth
- After cleaning the wound, if bleeding re-occurs stop the bleeding again by pressing a clean cloth against the wound
- Seek medical attention if unable to stop the bleeding in ten minutes with firm pressure and/or if there is something in the wound that will not easily rinse out
- Protect the wound and keep it moist with a non-stick bandage for ideal healing potential
- For extra protection you may use an antibacterial ointment, e.g. bacitracin, polysporin, double antibiotic ointment. Be alert to possible allergic effects of neomycin
- Change the bandage if it gets wet or dirty

Prevention

It is impossible to prevent all abrasion injuries, but you may decrease the number of abrasion injuries by wearing protective pads and covering exposed skin with a layer of clothing.

What is a Bruise?

A bruise is an area that is usually purple or dark red from blood that has leaked out of the blood vessels under your skin. This usually occurs after a fall or a bump against an object. The area may be swollen and quite painful at first, then will become less painful and lighter in color within a week or two as your body reabsorbs the blood.

Care

- For the first 2 days after injury, you may apply cold compresses for 15 to 20 minutes per hour while awake. This can help reduce the pain and swelling that go with the bruise.
- After 2 days, you may change to warm compresses for 20 minutes per hour while awake for comfort.
- Massaging the bruise can actually cause more damage and should be avoided.

Alert

Some medical conditions and medications can make a person more prone to bruises. These include anemia, certain blood diseases, and medications such as aspirin or blood thinners. Consult your doctor about frequent bruising or a bruise that is firm, raised and/or does not show fading over one week's time.

A cut or laceration is an opening in the skin caused by trauma. It may have straight or jagged edges.

Who is at Risk?

Anyone who is exposed to sharp edges such as knives, screwdrivers, other tools, or even paper.

Causes

Being involved in activities where sharp edges may come in contact with the skin.

Care

- Wash and dry your hands
- Apply direct pressure to any bleeding with a clean paper towel or cloth until bleeding has stopped
- Rinse the wound with clean water
- Do not use hydrogen peroxide, iodine solutions, alcohol, or soap
- Reapply pressure if bleeding continues. If unable to stop bleeding with 10 minutes of firm pressure, seek medical help
- Get a tetanus shot if cut by a rusty or dirty object and your shot is not up to date
- A topical antimicrobial ointment may be applied over the open area. Be alert to possible allergic reactions to neomycin
- Place a clean non-stick bandage over the cut to keep the wound clean and moist
- Change the bandage if it becomes wet or soiled
- Keep the wound moist and keep it covered (to prevent scab formation) until the skin grows back
- See your doctor for a puncture, jagged, or deep cut

Prevention

Use care whenever being exposed to sharp edges.