

Minor Cuts, Scrapes and Burns

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Care for Minor Cuts & Scrapes

1. **Wash your hands** – Make sure your hands are clean so that the wound is not contaminated with additional dirt or germs.
2. **Allow the wound to bleed slightly** – This helps cleanse impurities from the wound. You may apply slight pressure on either side of the cut or scrape to help it bleed.
3. **Clean the wound with soap and water** – Flush the wound with water. Then, saturate a sterile gauze pad or clean cloth with soap and water. Wash the wound carefully, moving all dirt and debris out of the wound and away from the edges.
4. **Flush the wound liberally with water** – All remnants of soap, dirt, and debris should be flushed from the cut or scrape, which should now be clean. If any visible dirt remains, repeat steps 3 & 4.
5. **You may apply an antibiotic ointment** – Although not necessary, an antibiotic ointment containing neomycin, polymyxin, and bacitracin may help prevent infection. Use sparingly.
6. **Cover the wound with a sterile bandage** – This will keep the wound clean and serve as a reminder to protect the wound from further trauma.

Care for Minor Burns

1. **Apply cold water or ice compress** – This will help minimize the burn's severity by slowing or stopping the spread of the burn into surrounding tissue. Immersion of a superficial first-degree burn in ice-cold water, or the application of an ice water dressing may often prevent the burn from becoming a second-degree burn. The burn should be kept cold until the cold becomes uncomfortable.
2. **Remove the applied cold until the burning sensation returns, then repeat step 1** – Steps 1 & 2 should be repeated until the burn is not longer significantly painful. At least three to four repetitions are usually required.
3. **If the skin is blistered or broken**, follow the steps from the “**Care for Minor Cuts, Scrapes and Burns**” document. **DO NOT BREAK THE BLISTERS** when cleaning the area.
4. **If no blisters or broken skin are apparent**, wash the area lightly with soap and cold water, rinse thoroughly, and cover the area with a small amount of antibiotic ointment. Cover with a sterile bandage. The ointment/cream will help protect the skin from breaking and provide protection from infection. It will also help prevent the bandage from sticking to the wound/burn.

CALL YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER IF THE WOUND:

- **Is caused by an animal bite or scratch**
- **Is particularly large or deep**
- **Will not stop bleeding**
- **Becomes infected (see signs of wound infection)**

S.H.A.R.P.

Signs and Symptoms of Wound Infection

- **SWELLING** - The area around the wound begins to swell.
- **HEAT** - The area around the wound feels warm.
- **ACHE** - You experience pain that is out of proportion to the size of the wound.
- **REDNESS** - The area around the wound is red, sometimes with streaks extending away from the wound site.
- **PUS** - White blood cells are the body's defense against infection, and often accumulate in the infected wound.