

CUTS AND SCRAPES

The information provided in this safety topic is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice or formal first aid training.

Proper first aid treatment for minor cuts, scrapes, and abrasions is important to promote healing and prevent infection. If you are providing first aid care to someone at work, or to yourself, for a minor cut, scrape, or abrasion, these guidelines can help.

- 1. Wash your hands.** This helps avoid infection. If you are assisting someone else with first aid, wear disposable gloves and protective eyewear.
- 2. Stop the bleeding.** Apply gentle pressure with a clean bandage or cloth and elevate the wound until the bleeding stops.
- 3. Clean the wound.** Rinse the wound with water. You can wash around the wound with mild soap, but don't get soap in the wound. Don't use hydrogen peroxide or iodine, which can be irritating. Remove any dirt or debris with tweezers that have been cleaned with alcohol. A doctor should be seen if all the debris cannot be removed.
- 4. Apply an antibiotic or petroleum jelly gently,** in a thin layer, over the wound.
- 5. Cover the wound.** Apply a bandage, rolled gauze, or gauze held in place with paper tape. Covering the wound keeps it clean.



After first aid care is provided for minor cuts, scrapes, or abrasions, the dressing should be changed at least once a day and the injury should be monitored for signs of infection, like redness, warmth, swelling, pain, fever, or drainage.

Using PPE is important to minimize the risk of exposure to bloodborne pathogens. If there is blood or bodily fluids, always wear gloves and protective eyewear when giving first aid care.

- After providing any type of first aid, wash your hands immediately.
- All surfaces must be thoroughly cleaned and decontaminated after exposure to blood or bodily fluids.

Discussion

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If you think a minor cut may be infected, what is the best course of action?

If you had to grab a first aid kit in a hurry, do you know where to find it?