

Wound Care

What is a wound?

A wound is a break in the skin. It may be a scrape that takes off the top layer of skin, called a simple abrasion. It could also be a cut, called a small laceration. Wounds often happen with a fall or friction injury like rug burn.



How to care for a basic wound at home

1. Wash your hands with soap and water. This keeps germs and infection from spreading.
2. Wash the wound and the skin around it with soap and water to remove dirt and grime. You may scrub the wound gently if needed. If the wound has just happened and dirt does not wash out easily, call your child's doctor.
3. Rinse the area with water.
4. Dry gently with a clean towel.
5. If the doctor says it is ok, put on an antibiotic ointment such as Polysporin® or Bacitracin® on the wound. Be sure to let the doctor know if your child is allergic to these ointments. **Do not use Neosporin®.**
6. Cover with a clean Band-Aid® or bandage.
7. Repeat steps 1 through 6 each day and change the bandage.
 - Use a bandage over the wound for _____ days or until a scab has formed over the wound. If your child "picks" at the scab, it is OK to keep a bandage on.
 - Leave your child's wound open to air for a few hours a day while your child does quiet activities. This will help the wound heal.

ALERT: Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if:

- You cannot get all of the dirt out of your child's wound with gentle scrubbing.
- The wound is deep, has dirt or an object such as glass or splinters stuck in it. These wounds may need special cleaning for proper healing.
- The wound is deep or wide open. These wounds may need stitches.
- The wound shows any sign of infection such as increased redness, swelling, pus or drainage or it feels warm to the touch.
- Your child has more pain.
- The wound edges reopen or separate.
- Your child develops a fever.
- Your child has special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

This teaching sheet is meant to help you care for your child. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up.