

Cut or Scrape

Act Fast: If there's bleeding, first press firmly over the site with a clean cloth until it stops, anywhere from 3 to 15 minutes. Clean under lukewarm running water and gently pat dry. When a wound is dirty or was caused by an animal scratch, rinse it with water and gently lather with soap. If the skin is broken, apply a thin layer of an over-the-counter **antibiotic ointment**, then cover with a bandage or **gauze** and **adhesive tape**. If you can't control the bleeding after several attempts with direct pressure, call your pediatrician or 911, or head to an E.R. If a large piece of skin has been removed, wrap it in a clean, moist cloth and place it in a bag over ice -- a doctor may be able to reattach it. An animal bite that has caused a deep cut should be seen by a doctor.

Follow-Up Care: Dab on the anti-biotic ointment and apply a new bandage daily (or twice daily, if it's a large or deep wound) until the cut heals, so you can't pick at it. If it appears to be forming or draining pus or becomes swollen, tender, or red, see a doctor right away to treat the infection. After the wound heals, slather on **SPF 30** until it starts to fade, because newly healed skin can sunburn more easily, making any eventual scar more noticeable.

Burn

Act Fast: Immediately hold under cool running water or apply a cold, wet towel until the pain **subsides**. Cover any small blisters with a loose bandage or **gauze** and tape; call a doctor as soon as possible if burns are on the face, hands, or if they're larger than 1/4 inch anywhere on the body. If the burn looks deep -- the skin may be white or brown and dry -- go to the E.R. For a burn covering a tenth of the body or more, don't use **cold compresses**; call 911 and cover the victim with a clean sheet or a blanket to prevent **hypothermia** until help arrives.

Follow-Up Care: Don't pop any blisters yourself. If the skin breaks, apply an **anti-biotic cream** and cover the area with a bandage or gauze and tape until it's healed. Watch for any redness, swelling, tenderness, or discharge -- all signs of infection.

Did You Know? Scalds, from hot foods or liquids, are the most common burn injury in children ages 6 months to 2 years.

Nosebleed

Act Fast: Sit upright, but don't tilt your head back. Loosen any tight clothing around your neck. Pinch the lower end of your nose close to the nostrils and lean forward while you apply pressure continuously for five to ten minutes. Don't release and check the nose; it could **prolong** the bleeding.

Follow-Up Care: If the nosebleed is the result of a **trauma**, reduce swelling by holding an ice pack against the bridge of the nose after the bleeding slows down. If it **persists** after ten minutes or returns later, call your doctor or go to the E.R. to check for a break.

Splinter or Glass

Act Fast: Use soap and water to wash around the splinter. Clean a pair of tweezers with rubbing alcohol and slowly pull the splinter out. Wash the skin again. When a splinter is hard to remove, leave it for a day or so to see whether it comes out on its own. If you have stepped on a piece of glass, and it's not a single **shard** you can easily remove, gently wrap a clean cloth around the area and go to the E.R. Ask your doctor about an X-ray even if you think you've gotten the glass out; scans often find shards that can lead to infection.

Follow-Up Care: If the splinter isn't out after a few days or is causing pain, turning red, or has pus, see your doctor to have it removed safely.

Eye Trauma

Act Fast: If the **victim** has **severe** pain, constant tearing, light **sensitivity**, or blurry vision after being poked or hit in the eye, hold a cool, wet cloth over the area and head to the E.R. There may be a scratch on the eye's surface, which is treated with **prescription** drops or **ointment** and usually heals within 48 hours. If a **chemical** has been splashed in his eye, hold the eyelid open and flush with lukewarm water and call Poison Control (800-222-1222).

Follow-Up Care: **Monitor** the victim for pain and vision problems in the weeks that follow a poked eye. These could be a sign of traumatic iritis, an **inflammation** of the colored part of the eye, or a deeper injury.

Insect Bite or Sting

Act Fast: If the insect left a stinger, gently scrape the skin with your fingernail or a credit card to remove it without breaking it. (Using tweezers can squeeze out more **venom**.) Call 911 if you have trouble breathing, are coughing, or develops a **hoarse** voice, **hives**, or swollen lips or tongue.

Follow-Up Care: For itching, hold a **cold compress** over the area for a minute, or apply a **topical antihistamine** (if the skin isn't broken or scabbed). Contact your doctor if you suspect a tick bite. He may want to test for **Lyme** and other tick-borne diseases.

Did You Know? Bites and stings are the third most common accident seen in the E.R. among kids 4 and under.

First-Aid FAQ

Q: Do cuts heal faster under a bandage or when left uncovered to "breathe"?

A: While a cut is still open, a bandage can help **prevent** infection and scabs. But after a few days, a little air can speed healing.

Q: Are **antibiotic ointments** really necessary?

A: Yes, medicines like Neosporin can help healing. But you don't want to apply it if you don't need it, for example to a small scrape or a bug bite when the skin isn't open. Some researchers believe antibiotic overuse has led to the rise of tough-to-treat staph infections like MRSA.

Q: Any tricks to getting my child to tolerate an ice pack?

A: Parents tend to make the pack too cold, often by placing ice in a thin plastic bag. But a compress doesn't need to be frigid to bring down swelling; just wrap some ice in a dry washcloth. Younger kids might like the animal-shaped compresses you keep in the fridge or freezer.

Q: When do you need to get a tetanus shot after an injury?

A: Some wounds caused by a dirty, rusty, or dusty object put you at risk for tetanus. If you've gotten your immunizations on schedule, you're probably fine. But to be safe, call the pediatrician to discuss the tetanus risk.