

August 15, 2014



# Share the Wellness Tip

## Caring For A Cut

Whether it's from chopping vegetables or falling off your bike, taking care of cuts is a part of life. But how do you know when a cut is too serious to treat yourself?

You should seek emergency medical care if the bleeding is spurting or can't be stopped (for example, after applying pressure for 10 minutes), or if the cut causes loss of feeling or function. Seek care if the injury was caused by an animal or human bite, burn, electrical injury or puncture wound (e.g., a nail).

Visit your doctor for treatment if a cut has any of the following characteristics:

- It's on the face.
- It has jagged edges or the edges gape open.
- It becomes tender or inflamed.
- The person has a temperature higher than 100 degrees Fahrenheit.
- There is dirt in the cut that can't be removed.
- Thick, creamy, grayish fluid drains from the cut.
- It's a puncture wound and the person hasn't had a tetanus shot in the last five years.
- The cut is accompanied by red streaks.

### Caring for Cuts at Home

Fortunately, you can treat minor cuts yourself. First, wash your hands with soap or antibacterial cleanser to prevent infection. Then, wash the cut thoroughly with mild soap and water. Clean tweezers with isopropyl alcohol (rubbing alcohol), and use them to remove any dirt that remains in the cut after washing it to help prevent infection.

Apply pressure with gauze or a clean cloth to stop the bleeding. If blood soaks through the gauze or cloth, don't remove it. Put more gauze or cloth over the one you've already used, and continue applying pressure. When the bleeding has stopped, apply antibacterial ointment to the cut.

If the cut is located where it could get dirty or irritated by clothing, cover it with an adhesive strip or sterile gauze and adhesive tape, and change it every day. If not, you can leave the cut uncovered, which may even help it heal faster.

*Source: KidsHealth.org; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

