

## Self-Care for Cuts, Scrapes, and Burns

Your health and safety are very important to us. Because of the large number of people with the flu, hospitals and emergency rooms are very busy. As a result, we are closely evaluating who we can take in the ambulance to the hospital.

We have evaluated that you do not need to go in the ambulance to the hospital at this time. Paramedics are giving you this sheet to help you care for yourself at home.

You can get medical care at a clinic, urgent care center or an emergency room. If you decide to do so, you will need to get to these places on your own. Remember hospitals are seeing a lot of patients with the flu. If you go to a hospital you risk getting infected with the flu.

Cuts, scrapes, and burns happen to everyone. A small wound can only threaten your health if it causes severe blood loss or if it becomes infected.

## **Caring for Cuts, Scrapes, and Puncture Wounds**

If you're caring for someone else, remember to protect yourself from illnesses carried in blood and body fluids. Use latex gloves or whatever else is available (a towel, perhaps) as a barrier between you and the blood.

### **Control Bleeding**

- Apply direct pressure to a cut or scrape to stop the bleeding.
- Allow a minor puncture wound to stop bleeding on its own, unless the bleeding is heavy. This may help clean out the wound.

### **Clean the Wound**

- Kill germs and remove the dirt by washing the wound with warm water and soap.
- Soak a minor puncture wound in warm, sudsy water for several minutes.
- Repeat cleaning or soaking at least 2 times every day.

### **Cover the Injury**

- Hold the edges of a cut together with a butterfly bandage.
- Apply antibiotic ointment.
- For a cut or scrape, apply an adhesive bandage or clean gauze. Tape it in place.
- Cover a minor puncture with gauze to absorb drainage and let in air to aid in the healing process.

### **Watch for signs of Infection**

- If the wound begins to drain yellow or green fluid
- If the skin around the wound becomes red, warm, swollen, or increasingly painful
- Any red streaking of the skin around the wound
- Fever

If any of the above signs are noted, you should seek medical attention by your primary care provider.

### **Treating Minor Burns**

- Cool the burn immediately. Otherwise, the skin continues to hold heat and will keep burning. Use cloths soaked in cool water, place the burned area under a gentle stream of cool water, or submerge the burn in a full sink or bucket
- Treat minor burn like you would treat a minor cut or scrape. Wash with soap and water, then cover it with a loose dressing.
- **DO NOT** put butter, oil, or ointment on a burn.
- **DO NOT** break blisters or pull off skin from a broken blister. The skin helps protect the healing skin underneath.

### **Watch for signs of Infection**

- It can be more difficult detecting signs of infection in burns, because burns both tend to be red and warm to touch. Both of these can be signs of infection for other wounds.
- Potential signs of infection include:
  - Change in color of the burned area
  - Purplish discoloration, especially if swelling is present
  - Green colored discharge
  - Fever

If any of the above signs are noted, you should seek medical attention from your primary care provider.

This information is to help you care for a person who has a cut, scrape, or burn.

The evaluation and/or treatment by the paramedics today are not to replace the recommendation of a doctor.

You can get medical care by a doctor on your own.

You should call 911 for any medical symptom, concerns that happen after we leave today.



These Home Care Instructions are for use during specified times of severe pandemic influenza, courtesy of the Metro Region EMS System, Metro Emergency Services Board, 2099 W. University Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55014-3431