



## **FIRST AID-ABRASIONS & LACERATIONS**

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- Common athletic injuries to the skin include abrasions (road rash, strawberries, floor burns) and laceration (cuts). While usually not serious, both require prompt attention to prevent infection and reduce scarring.

**WHEN TREATING ANY OPEN WOUND,  
BE AWARE THERE IS A POSSIBILITY FOR  
TRANSMISSION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES  
SUCH AS HEPATITIS B AND HIV**

**~ALWAYS WEAR OSHA APPROVED GLOVES ~**

### ***ABRASIONS***

- An abrasion is the removal of the top layer or layers of skin by the friction of anything rubbing directly on the skin. Usually, an abrasion oozes blood or fluid from injured capillaries (small blood vessels). Because superficial nerve endings in the skin are exposed, abrasions tend to be very uncomfortable.

As soon as possible, clean the abrasion with clear water and soap wearing OSHA approved gloves if you are treating anyone other than yourself. A surgical soap, Betadine®, or Hibiclens®, is preferable, but any mild soap without fragrance, such as Ivory® dish washing soap, can be used in a pinch. Try to remove all foreign material from the wound using a washcloth or sterile gauze pads. **Do not use a scrub brush, as it is too harsh.** If you cannot remove all imbedded material, seek additional medical care. Remaining material may cause infection or tattooing of the skin.

Generally, abrasions should be covered and kept moist. Newer dressings such as plastic dressing (Tegaderm, Bioclusive) or hydrocolloid dressings (Tegasorb) maintain a moist environment, though covering the wound with an anti-bacterial ointment, such as Bacitracin®, Polysporin®, or Neosporin®, and a not-stick dressing is still acceptable. Change this dressing several times a day until healing is complete. When an abrasion is over a joint or a moving body part, keep the abrasion moist until healed. Otherwise, scabs may be torn loose during movement and hinder the healing process.

**IF, AT ANY TIME, THE ABRASION SHOWS SIGNS OF INFECTION SUCH AS REDNESS, INCREASED TENDERNESS, INCREASED PAIN, OR INCREASED TEMPERATURE, SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION IMMEDIATELY.**

### ***LACERATIONS***

- A laceration is a wound that penetrates all layers of the skin and may also continue into subcutaneous fat, muscle, blood vessels, and nerves. A laceration will display a gap in the skin that can be opened or closed when pressure is applied along the sides of the wound.

Lacerations may also damage blood vessels. If a laceration is bleeding profusely, apply direct pressure; remembering to wear OSHA approved gloves if treating someone other than yourself. Use whatever is available to control the bleeding, but a sterile gauze pad is preferred. Apply additional gauze pads as needed. **Do not remove the previous gauze pads** as they become saturated with blood. If a laceration is spurting bright red blood, an artery may have been damaged. If so, get immediate medical attention. **Do not apply a tourniquet.**

Most lacerations need suturing (stitches) by a physician. This promotes healing and reduces scarring. Follow your physician's instructions to care for a sutured laceration. The length of time stitches stay in depends upon the location of the laceration, its length and/or depth, and associated tissue damage.

**AGAIN, IF THERE ARE ANY SIGNS OF INFECTION, SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION IMMEDIATELY.**

***IF YOU ARE AT ALL UNSURE OF HOW TO TREAT AN ABRASION OR LACERATION, SEEK PROFESSIONAL MEDICAL ADVICE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. LACK OF ATTENTION MAY RESULT IN A WORSENERD CONDITION.***

*The preceding information was gathered from: American Red Cross, Community First Aid & Safety, Mosby Lifeline, 1993 and ©1992 United States Olympic Committee, Sports Medicine Division (revised 23 October 1999).*