



TAKING THE STING OUT OF SKIN INJURIES

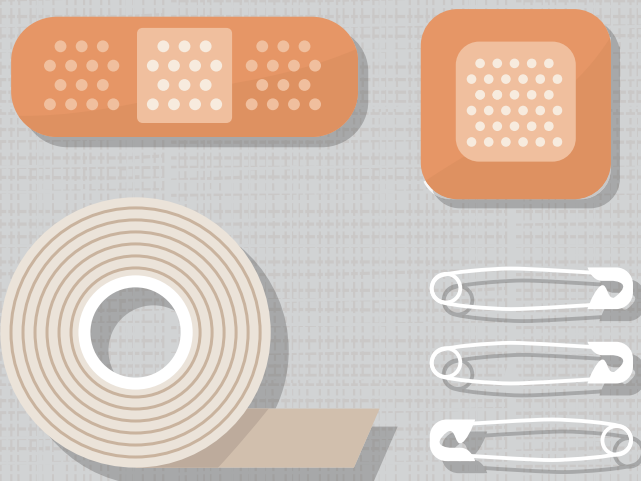
Common skin injuries in sports include: lacerations, incisions, blisters, abrasions, avulsions and punctures. When properly treated, an acute skin injury will heal faster with decreased risk of infection and adverse reactions.

CARING FOR SKIN INJURIES

See a physician as soon as possible if the wound is deep and requires sutures or staples, is heavily contaminated, involves tendon or nerve injury, becomes warm, develops drainage, is painful, forms a rash or is slow to heal.

CLEANING AND DRESSING

- + Clean the wound and surrounding skin thoroughly with saline or tap water irrigation as soon as possible.
- + Don't scrub or swab the wound since this won't reduce bacteria and can damage healing skin.
- + Be cautious when using antiseptics to clean wounds as they can be toxic to skin tissue.
- + After the initial cleaning, the wound should only be cleaned if it becomes visibly contaminated or infected.
- + Any debris should be removed prior to dressing the wound.
 - A health care provider, such as an athletic trainer, should debride the wound if there are large amounts of debris.
- + The wound should be covered, rather than left uncovered, until fully healed.
- + Cover the wound with nonocclusive dressings (sterile gauze, nonadherent pads, adhesive strips and patches) or occlusive dressings (films, foams and hydrocolloids). Occlusive dressings, available at pharmacies, are preferred since they create an optimal healing environment.



AFTER CARE AND FOLLOW-UP

- + Monitor for signs of infection:
 - Fever, pain, edema, warmth or delayed wound healing
- + Monitor for adverse reactions that can come from some cleaning solutions, topical antimicrobial agents and dressings:
 - Rash, white discoloration, tenderness or a burning sensation
- + Have the wound area inspected by an athletic trainer or sports medicine provider daily throughout the healing process to ensure it's properly healing and dressed.

