

ABRASIONS OF THE SKIN

An abrasion is an injury in which the top layer of skin has been scraped away. It may be caused during a fall or by bumping into a rough object. An abrasion is not usually a problem unless it covers a large area or dirt and other material get into the scrape. In some cases, a scar may form.

Symptoms *may* include:

- Discomfort
- Pain
- Swelling or bleeding
- May look raw and irritated
- Scab forms once healing begins, usually within a few days
- Tight feeling
- Can crack open under tension, especially if over a joint

What *you* can do:

- Call your doctor during regular hours if the patient has not had a tetanus booster in over 10 years (or 7 years if the scrape is dirty).
- Wash hands before touching the wound.
- Vigorously wash the wound for at least 5 minutes with warm water and liquid soap (liquid soap cuts grease better than bar soap).
- Use wet gauze or a clean soft cloth to remove dirt.
- If you need to remove tar in a wound, rub with petroleum jelly, then rinse again.
- Use sterile scissors to trim any pieces of loose skin away.
- Rinse well.
- If the scrape is small, leave it exposed to air. If the scrape is large, cover it with a non-stick dressing.
- Change the dressing in 12 hours then remove it after 24 hours.
- For abrasions on hands or feet and over joints, keep covered until healed.
- Change dressings daily: apply an antibiotic ointment to keep the crust soft to prevent reopening of the wound, cleanse daily with warm water, re-apply ointment.
- DO NOT remove a scab; allow it to fall off naturally.

Contact your doctor if you are unable to get the wound clean or it is very large, if an abrasion appears infected (shows increased redness, warmth, swelling, or pus drainage), or if it gets worse despite treatment.