

## When to call your Doctor or Health Care Provider:



- If you are unable to stop any bleeding
- If the wound is very deep or has jagged edges
- If you have not had a tetanus shot in 5 years and you were cut by a rusty or dirty object
- If there is something in the wound that will not easily rinse out
- If the wound becomes infected
- The wound will not heal

### Signs of infection include:

- Increased redness and warmth around the wound
- Increased drainage and odor from the wound
- Increased pain near the wound
- Swelling near the wound
- Fever

***If you should notice any of these symptoms call your Doctor or Health Care Provider.***



\*For more information on moist wound healing, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ngAAZwmS3Tc>

This educational brochure has been brought to you by the Association for the Advancement of Wound Care (AAWC) through the volunteer support and clinical expertise of the AAWC Public Awareness Task Force. It is a revised and updated edition of the ABCs of Skin and Wound Care originally published in 2005 by AAWC.

### OUR MISSION

AAWC's mission is to advance the care of people with and at risk for wounds.

### DID YOU KNOW?

AAWC has a variety of membership and contribution options. Categories of membership exist for healthcare providers and their facilities, but also for wound care patients and their caregivers. In fact, patients, lay-caregivers and layperson advocates receive free lifetime memberships to AAWC!

### WOUND CARE PATIENTS NEED A VOICE!

Join today, and encourage your healthcare team to become professional members. For information, to join or to make a charitable contribution, please call or visit:

Toll Free: 866-AAWC-999

Outside of the US: 610-560-0484

[www.aawconline.org](http://www.aawconline.org)

### REPRINT REQUESTS

This brochure is part of the AAWC series of educational brochures which can be downloaded for free at [www.aawconline.org](http://www.aawconline.org). No permission is required to make and distribute reprints when the purpose is educational. Quality reprint orders are available from the AAWC Store on line at [www.aawconline.org](http://www.aawconline.org).



Copyright © 2015 AAWC

# The ABCs of Wound Care

## Basic Instructions for Patients and Caregivers



## Moist Wound Care:

Covering a clean wound will help you heal quickly by keeping it protected and moist. Wounds heal best if not too wet or dry.

### How do I do this?

Prepare the Wound:

- Wash your hands for 15 seconds and dry with a clean cloth
- Stop any bleeding by pressing a clean paper towel or cloth against the wound for several minutes
- After you have stopped the bleeding, rinse the wound with large amounts of clean water
- **Do not** use peroxide, iodine solutions, alcohol, or soap **in** the wound
- Gently remove any dirt with a clean, moist cloth
- Press a clean cloth against the wound for 10 minutes if it starts bleeding again



## Cover for Moist Wound Care:

- Protect the wound and keep it moist for ideal healing potential\*
- Apply a non-stick bandage
- Change the bandage if it gets wet, loosened or dirty
- Keep the wound bandaged until it is completely healed
- Avoid tape or adhesive bandages on fragile skin. Use gauze wrap or elastic bandage to keep bandages in place

## Abrasion: What is it?

The skin has been rubbed away, like with a skinned knee. These wounds can be painful and may bleed.

### CARE:

- Use moist wound care. With it, most abrasions will heal in a short period of time

### PREVENTION:

- To prevent further abrasions, cover and protect the skin with thick clothing or padding. This may help to reduce the number of skin injuries in the future



## Bruise: What is it?

A bruise is a colored area caused by blood leaking out of the blood vessels under your skin. The area may be swollen and painful at first. It may also change colors during healing.

### CARE:

- No moist wound care is needed if the skin is not broken
- 1-2 days after injury: apply a cold compress for 15 to 20 minutes per hour to reduce the pain and swelling from the injury
- After 2 days, apply a warm compress for 20 minutes per hour for comfort



## Cut: What is it?

A cut is a break in the skin caused by trauma. It may have straight or jagged edges.

### CARE:

- Use moist wound care. With moist wound care, minor cuts heal in a short period of time
- Deep or dirty cuts should be checked by your Doctor or Health Care Provider as soon as possible



## Skin Tear: What is it?

A skin tear is a peeling back of the outer layer of skin. It looks like an open blister or a loose flap of skin. People with fragile skin, especially the elderly and those who need physical help, are at a greater risk for skin tears.

### CARE:

- If the torn piece of skin is still attached, gently put it back in place
- Use moist wound care, and be gentle
- Apply a non-stick bandage
- Avoid tape or adhesive on fragile skin. Use gauze wrap or elastic bandage to keep dressings in place
- Avoid pulling movements, rubbing or sliding against the skin of hands, arms or legs

