

Wound Management and Prevention of Infection

Skin cuts, abrasions and/or wounds are common in contact sports. Players, coaches, referees, managers, parents/guardians should be vigilant in protecting players from infection, as many bacteria replicate fast once they enter a wound. In fact, they can replicate several times over a few hours. Accordingly, whenever a player, coach, referee, or manager becomes aware of an abrasion in the skin due to player-player contact or player-field contact (turf, goal, benches, etc.) the following procedure is recommended.

- As soon as possible (within minutes of the injury) the wound should be tended to.
- Whenever possible, play should be stopped and the player administered by a person trained in first aid.
- If necessary, the player should be moved from the playing field for treatment.
- The wound should be washed with soap and water thoroughly. If soap and water are not available, antiseptic washes or towelettes should be used.
- Sterile gauzes should be used to remove debris and dirt.
- After thoroughly cleansing the wound, an antibacterial disinfectant or sanitizing solution should be applied.
- Once bleeding is controlled, an antibacterial ointment and bandage should be applied.
- The player can re-enter the game if the wound is appropriately bandaged, bleeding has stopped and visible blood is covered.
- After the athletic event (game or practice), the player and parent/guardian should be notified of the need for proper wound care and what to look for regarding signs and symptoms of a developing infection.
- If the wound is not healing properly*, appropriate medical attention should be sought without delay.

* Signs and symptoms of infection include the development of: redness, swelling (i.e., small red bumps that resemble pimples, boils or spider bites), drainage, fever, area is warm to the touch, and possibly foul odor.

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