

FIRST AID – ABRASIONS

Common athletic injuries to the skin include abrasions such as road rash, strawberries or floor burns. While usually not serious, abrasions require prompt attention and correct technique 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 PROTECTIVE GLOVES

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 and/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 thoroughly with clear water and a gentle soap, wearing protective gloves if you are treating anyone other than yourself. If available, a surgical soap, Betadine® or Hibiclens® is preferable, by any mild soap without fragrance, such as Ivory® can be used in a pinch. Try to remove all foreign material from the wound using a wash cloth or sterile gauze pads. **Do not use a scrub brush as it is too harsh.** If available, a water-pik® may be used to remove debris. If you cannot remove all imbedded material, seek additional medical care. Remaining material may cause infection or tattooing of the skin.

Generally, following a thorough cleaning, abrasions should be covered with an anti-bacterial ointment, such as Bacitracin®, Polysporin®, or Neosporin®; then a non-stick dressing.

Change this dressing several times a day until the healing is complete. Allow the skin to heal itself as long as there is no presence of pus, undue redness, or odor. Should any of these signs occur, seek additional medical care as these are signs of infection. When an abrasion is over a joint or 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
- ODOR
- DISCOLORED EXUDATE

SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION IMMEDIATELY