

Care of Road Rash and Abrasions

Abrasions are injuries to the skin and its underlying tissue caused by rubbing or scraping. **Road rash** is a common term used for abrasions caused by scrapes received during an accident. Most road rash should heal within 2 weeks with good care of your wounds by keeping them clean and moist. Sometimes, road rash can go through all the layers of skin and require skin grafting surgery to heal. If your wounds take longer than 2 weeks to heal, they may be deeper wounds and should be looked at by your health care provider.

Daily Wound Cares

1. Wash your hands with soap and water before touching your wound.
2. Remove old dressings. Do not soak in water to remove. Dry dressing removal cleans away dead tissue and debris.
3. Wash your wounds gently once a day with antibacterial soap such as Dial® and a clean washcloth. Wash off antibiotic creams, soft scabs, and any loose dead tissue. You may have a small amount of bleeding. Most patients should wash their wounds during their daily showers.
4. Rinse your wounds well with plain water.
5. Dry off the skin around the wound with a towel.
6. Apply a thin layer of Bacitracin® to all **open** wounds. If your wound has been drying out between dressing changes, you may want to apply a thicker layer of Bacitracin®.
7. Apply a thin layer of moisturizing lotion to all **healed** areas of skin that surround the open wound.
8. Apply Cuticerin® (non-stick) gauze to all open wounds.

9. Secure dressings with cotton gauze as needed.

Pain

Your doctor may have prescribed pain medicines for you. Take this medicine 1 hour before washing your wounds.

Between wound cares use acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (Advil®) to treat pain. If you have any broken bones or are having surgery in less than a week do not take ibuprofen.

Pain will lessen as the wound heals. The wound may feel stiff, dry, itchy, or tight as it heals. Use moisturizing lotion to relieve these symptoms.

Care of Healed Skin

The skin is healed when it appears dull pink or red, is not moist or weepy, and no longer stings when you touch it. Newly healed skin needs moisturizing creams to prevent drying and cracking. Once your wound is healed, stop using the Bacitracin®, Cuticerin® gauze and gauze dressings. Apply creams (free of alcohol) such as Elta lite®, Aquaphor, Eucerin®, Nivea® as often as needed to keep the skin moist and soft.

When to Call

- Signs of infection:
 - Increasing redness and swelling around the wound
 - Foul smelling drainage or pus from the wound
 - Flu-like symptoms (fever, chills, nausea or vomiting, and muscle aches)
- Wounds that have not healed after 2-3 weeks
- Questions or concerns

Who to Call

Call your primary health care provider.

Trauma Clinic
608-263-7502

If you are a patient receiving care at UnityPoint – Meriter, Swedish American or a health system outside of UW Health, please use the phone numbers provided in your discharge instructions for any questions or concerns.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright ©12/2020. University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF6820