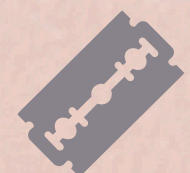


Self Harm Care Guide

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Adapted from Self Harm Care Guide v. 2.0, by Jamie H, 2023. Adapted with permission.

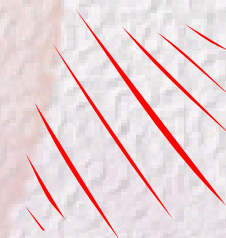


Tool Management

- ❌ Never use a tool if you don't know where it came from or what it touched.
- ❌ Dispose of tools after 3-5 uses, if you haven't used it in a while, or if there is rust on it.
- 🏥 If you used a tool that has rust on it, attend the local A&E (Hospital Emergency Department) as soon as possible due to the risk of tetanus.
- ✅ Disinfect before and after each use. Use 70% isopropyl alcohol to sterilize blades appropriately. Allow the tool to air-dry.
- ✅ Use sterile, single use tools if possible.
- 🛡️ Be up-to-date on your immunizations, especially your tetanus/Tdap vaccines.
- 📦 Store your tools in a clean location, away from moisture. This will reduce bacterial growth on your tools.
- 🗑️ When you are disposing of your tools, throw them away in a sharps container or other puncture-resistant container like a milk jug or a pill bottle



Depth of Wounds



The Epidermis

(Epis)

The epidermis is the first layer of the human skin. When injured, the separation of skin is generally not seen. Damage to the epidermis may or may not bleed, depending on whether you hit a capillary.



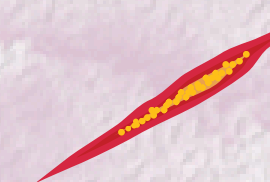
The Dermis

(Styrofoam/Styro)

The dermis is the second layer of the human skin. When injured, separation of the skin is commonly seen. Damage to the dermis will generally bleed. If you hit the dermis, you will be able to see the white layer of skin for a few seconds before blood fills the wound. When you hit the dermis, you are putting yourself at a higher risk of infections.



The Muscle



The Hypodermis

(Beans)

The hypodermis, or the subcutaneous layer, is a layer of skin which is primarily composed of fat and contains a network of blood vessels and nerve fibres. Located directly beneath the dermis, cuts to this layer will gape wide open and expose yellow cells or "bubbles" of fat (these bubbles can appear flat or protrude outwards). Cuts to the hypodermis tend to bleed faster due to the larger number of capillaries in that layer. **Wounds of this layer of skin require urgent medical attention.**

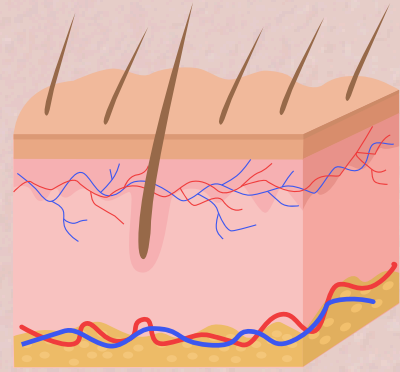


The Fascia

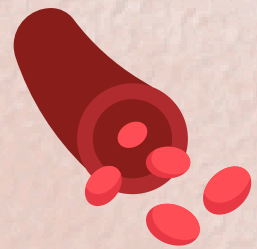
(Laffy Taffy)

The fascia will appear to be a thin white layer of skin located directly beneath the hypodermis. **Wounds of this layer of skin require emergent medical attention.**

The muscle is located beneath the last layer of skin (the fascia). It has a reddish-brown colour to it and injury to it carries significant risks. **Wounds of this layer require emergency medical attention.**

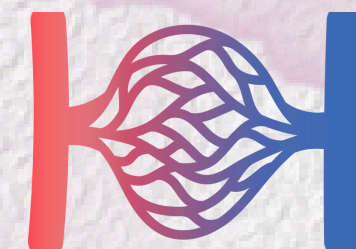


Things you may hit



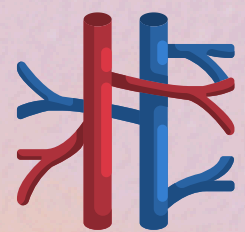
The Veins

The veins collect oxygen-deprived blood and return them to your heart. They are thin, and flow in a pressurised stream. **If you sever a vein, immediately put pressure on the affected area. If blood continues to flow after several minutes, call an ambulance.**



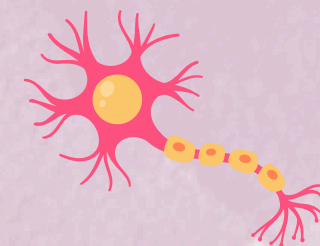
The Arterioles

The arterioles are the blood vessels that connect your arteries to your capillaries. If you hit an arteriole, it will squirt or pulse blood and the pressure will pulsate with your heartbeat. **If you hit an arteriole, immediately put pressure on the affected area. If blood continues to flow after several minutes or if the bleeding is heavy, call an ambulance.**



The Arteries

The arteries are major blood vessels that carry oxygen-rich blood from your heart to your cells. If you hit an artery, it will bleed or squirt blood rapidly and it will not stop with direct pressure. The blood will be bright red. **Immediately apply direct pressure and call an ambulance. Severed arteries can be fatal in less than five minutes.**



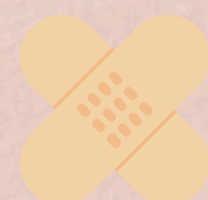
The Nerves

The nerves transmit information from your brain to the rest of your body. When you hit a nerve, you will feel large amounts of pain (commonly described as “burning, hot, electric, or shooting”), along with a loss of sensation, feeling like there are pins on the affected area or weakness to the affected area. Mild nerve damage may heal on its own, however, **major nerve damage requires emergency medical attention and surgery.**



General First Aid

Step 1 for all severities : Immediately put direct pressure on the wound to stop the bleeding!
Do not pour antiseptic solutions (including alchomohol) into your wounds. This kills healthy cells too!



Minor cuts

Minor cuts are defined as wounds that do not appear to be bleeding excessively, and the wound only extends to the epidermis or the dermis.



Irrigate the wound using normal saline, or wash it under running water.



After cleaning the wound, apply a layer of antibiotic cream if available (such as Polymyxin B and Bacitracin, brand names Polysporin)



Dress the wound appropriately by using a new, sterile bandage or dressing. If blood soaks through the bandage, add a new bandage over top.



Moderate Wounds

Moderate wounds are defined as wounds to the hypodermis that does NOT result in life-threatening bleeding (see below).



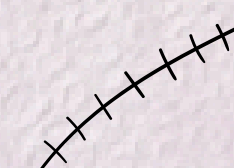
Irrigate the wound using sterile normal saline.



Attend the A&E within 3-6 hours. If you are unable, apply steri-strips.

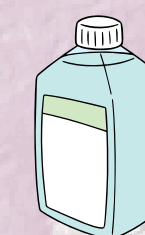


In the meantime, dress the wound to keep it clean. If the bleeding cannot be stopped, call an ambulance and attend the local A&E immediately.

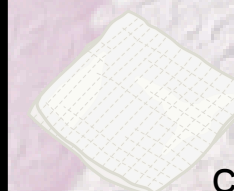


Severe Wounds

Severe wounds are defined as wounds to the fascia or deeper that does not meet the criteria for life-threatening bleeding.



Irrigate the wound with sterile normal saline and only with sterile normal saline



Dress the wound to prevent contamination with sterile dressings



Attend the A&E immediately.

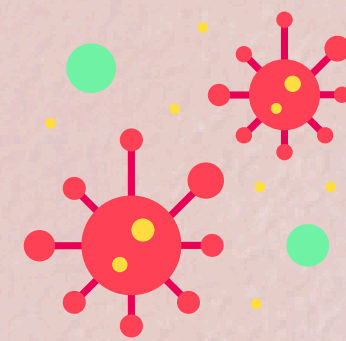


Life-Threatening Bleeding

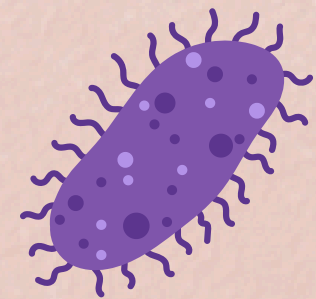
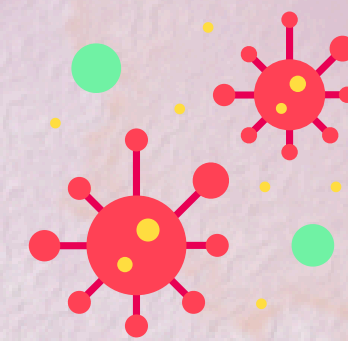
Life-threatening bleeding is defined as heavy bleeding that cannot be controlled within ten minutes, or if you feel cold, dizzy, or if you look pale.

If you feel cold, dizzy, or if you look pale, you are likely going into hemorrhagic shock.

Call an ambulance immediately and apply direct pressure. Follow the dispatcher's instructions.



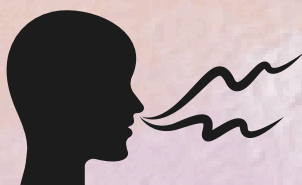
Infections



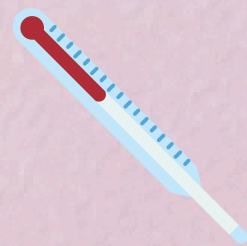
A wound may be infected if there are...



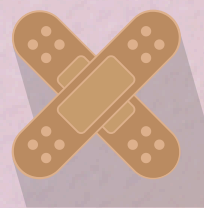
Pus or other types of opaque drainage



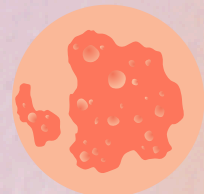
Abnormal foul odour



Increasing temperature



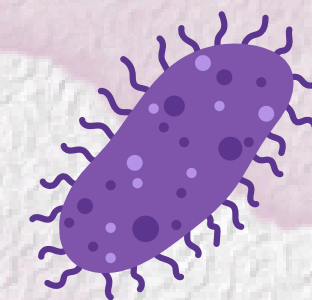
Excessive pain



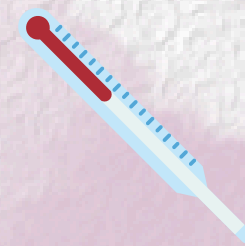
Abnormal redness or streaks

Tip: You can use a pen to draw a circle around the redness to see if the redness is growing. Growing redness is a sign of an infection.

The safest thing to do when you notice an infection is to speak with a healthcare professional, who may prescribe you oral antibiotics. **DO NOT TAKE SOMEONE ELSE'S ANTIBIOTICS. THERE ARE DIFFERENT ANTIBIOTICS FOR DIFFERENT CONDITIONS.**



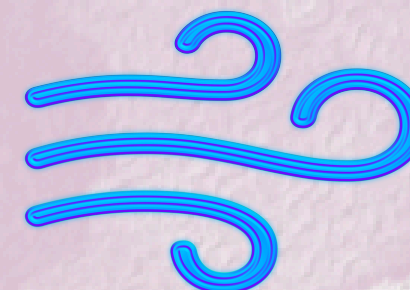
You may have sepsis if you develop...



A fever, or hypothermia
(Low temperature)



Tachycardia
(High heart rate)



Tachypnea
(Abnormally fast breathing)



Lightheadedness

If you are experiencing these symptoms proceed to your local emergency department immediately.