



# Health And Well-Being

## Properly Care For Wounds

(NAPSA)—The upside of warm weather is all the fun activities and excursions. The downside is the increased risk of injuries, particularly cuts, scrapes and other wounds. The American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) offers tips on wounds that may need emergency medical attention and how to properly clean, treat and protect minor ones at home.

### Serious Wounds

Sometimes it's hard to determine what wounds can be treated at home and which require a trip to the emergency department. These guidelines identify which wounds need emergency medical care.

- Wounds that will not stop bleeding after five minutes of applying direct pressure.

- Long or deep cuts that need stitches.

- Cuts over a joint.

- Cuts that may impair function of a body area such as an eyelid or lip.

- Cuts that remove all of the layers of the skin like those from slicing off the tip of a finger.

- Cuts from an animal or human bite.

- Cuts that have damaged underlying nerves, tendons, or joints.

- Cuts over a possible broken bone.

- Cuts caused by a crushing injury.

- Cuts with an object embedded in them.

- Cuts caused by a metal object or a puncture wound.

Call 911 or emergency services immediately if:

- Bleeding from the cut does not slow during the first 15 minutes of steady direct pressure.



**Most cuts are minor, but it's still important to properly care for them.**

- Signs of shock occur.
- Breathing is difficult because of a cut to the neck or chest.

- A deep cut to the abdomen causes moderate to severe pain.

- A cut to the eyeball.

- A cut amputates or partially amputates an extremity.

### Minor Wounds

Most cuts are minor, but it's still important to properly care for them.

"If you delay care for only a few hours, a wound can build up enough bacteria to cause a serious infection and increases your risk of a noticeable scar," said Dr. Richard O'Brien, an emergency physician. ACEP recommends a simple, three-step process.

1. Clean the cut with soap and water.

2. Treat the cut with an antibiotic ointment to prevent infection and to keep it moist to decrease scarring.

3. Protect the cut by covering it with a clean bandage.

For more information on how to handle medical emergencies, visit [www.ACEP.org](http://www.ACEP.org).