

HEALTH IDENTIFIERS & SYMPTOMS OF ILLNESS

BLEEDING AND WOUNDS

If your skin gets broken or cut, blood comes to the surface where you were the injured. These injuries are also called blood loss, cuts, scrapes, lacerations, abrasions, puncture wounds and open injury bleeding. These are examples that may result in external bleeding. Sometimes blood also leaves through natural openings in the body like the mouth, vagina or rectum. These may be signs of internal bleeding.



SOME FACTS about Bleeding & Wounds

- Bleeding can be either internal or external. Sometimes the injury/wound causes visible blood. In other instances the injury is internal and the bleeding is not easily seen.
- The amount of bleeding does not always indicate how serious the injury is. For example, a small cut on the scalp might bleed more than a deep puncture wound (a pointed object entering the skin).
- A small cut can become a serious medical problem if not cleaned and treated correctly. Keeping an injury clean helps prevent infections.
- Bleeding is more serious if you have a bleeding disorder or are taking blood-thinning medication such as aspirin or coumadin.
- People with diabetes and other chronic diseases often heal slowly.



SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

The most obvious sign of a wound may be bleeding. *Blood-loss, both internal and external, should also be considered if there is/are:*

- Bruising
- Signs of Shock
 - Paler than usual
 - Clammy skin
 - Dizziness, light-headedness or low blood pressure
 - Trouble breathing
 - Confusion, disorientation and weakness
- Dark tarry stools
- Painful or swollen stomach
- Blood-loss from openings like the mouth, ears etc...
- Blood in stool, urine, vagina (more than normal menstruation) or vomit



CAUSES

Bleeding may be the result of an injury, medical condition, or certain medications. Some medical conditions that result in bleeding are: ulcers, cancer and urinary tract infections. Examples of medications include: aspirin, motrin/ibuprofen and coumadin.

The following injuries might cause bleeding:

- Falls or blows from tripping, car accidents, sports injuries etc...
- Sharp objects that puncture the skin, such as knives, scissors, nails, pencils etc...
- Shaving cuts
- Bites from animals or humans
- Very dry skin that cracks and bleeds
- Side effect of some medications like coumadin



CAUTION

PREVENTION

- Try to prevent Falls (See Fact Sheet No. 11)
- Be Careful using Knives and Scissors
- Do not pick up Sharp Objects like broken glass - use a broom
- Shave when alert and not in a rush
- Stay away from animals unless you know they are friendly. They might bite or scratch
- Check Skin: use lotion if it is very dry to prevent cracking

Bleeding and Wounds



WHAT TO DO

- **Clean all MINOR cuts.**
 - Wash you hands with water and soap
 - Wash the cut with mild soap and water
 - Remove LOOSE dirt or objects from the wound
 - Put pressure on the wound to stop bleeding
 - Once bleeding stops, use antibacterial ointment (if ordered by doctor)
 - Bandage the wound if it is likely to get dirty
- **For larger, more serious cuts**
 - Apply pressure directly or with a dressing
 - Seek medical attention immediately
 - Observe for signs of shock
- Check that they are up-to-date on their Tetanus vaccine



CALL THE DOCTOR

Call the doctor or the nurse if:

- The **wound is large or deep**, even if it is not bleeding a lot.
- **Stitches** might be needed
- The wound is on the **face or reaches to the bone**
- The person was **bitten** by an animal or a human
- The wound looks **infected**
 - it is red, warm, painful, throbs, pusses or swollen
 - It is accompanied by a fever
 - red lines spread from wound towards the heart
- The person's **last tetanus shot** was more than 5 years ago



WHAT NOT TO DO

- **DO NOT** remove objects that are stuck in the body. Place pads around the object and tape it so that it doesn't move. Then, seek medical help.
- **DO NOT** clean very big wounds. Try to stop the bleeding and seek medical help.
- **DO NOT** assume a wound is clean. **CLEAN IT** if it is a small wound!
- **DO NOT** remove bandages to see if the wound has stopped bleeding. This might open the wound.



EMERGENCY

CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY IF:

- There is a **lot of blood** and you **can not stop it with pressure**
- The injury is **serious**
- There is a known **bleeding disorder**
- You suspect **internal bleeding**
 - The person vomits a red or black substance
 - The person passes a black bowel movement
 - The person has a distended (swollen) stomach
- The person is in **shock**



DOCUMENT

- Keep a record of how the injury happened and how it was treated. Also note what will be done to prevent it from getting infected.
- File an Incident Report (if required) and complete other documentation such as writing down a description in the logbook if the person requires emergency medical care.



TO LEARN MORE - Go to these websites:

- <http://www.webMD.com>
- <http://health.allrefer.com/health/bleeding.html>