Cuts and Scrapes

Definition
A scrape is an area where the skin is rubbed off. It usually occurs after you fall down or hit something. A scrape is usually not serious, but it can be painful and may bleed slightly.

A cut or laceration is an injury that results in a break or opening in the skin. It may be near the surface or deep, smooth or jagged. It may injure deep tissues, such as tendons, muscles, ligaments, nerves, blood vessels or bone.

First Aid
If the wound is bleeding severely, call 911.

Scrapes and cuts are often dirty. Even if you don’t see dirt, the wound can get infected. Make sure to clean the area thoroughly.

1. Wash your hands.
2. Wash the cut thoroughly with mild soap and water.
3. Pieces of dirt or debris should be removed with tweezers. However, DO NOT remove a large or deeply embedded object. Seek medical attention.
4. If available, apply antibiotic ointment.
5. Protect cuts with a clean bandage that will not stick to the wound.
6. If a small scrape is likely to get rubbed or dirty, apply a non-adhesive bandage. Otherwise, let it air dry.
7. Larger scrapes, or scrapes that bleed more, should be covered with a gauze bandage. Ice can help reduce swelling. Do not apply ice directly to the skin.
8. DO NOT breathe on an open wound.

When to Contact a Medical Professional
Call your doctor if:

- Bleeding is severe, spurting or cannot be stopped.
- Wound contains dirt and other debris deep inside.
- Wound is very large or deep, even if the bleeding is not severe.
- Wound looks like it may be infected. Signs of infection include warmth or red streaks at the injured site, pus or a fever.
- You have not had a tetanus shot within 10 years.
- The injury is due to a human or animal bite.
- There is impaired function or feeling from the cut.
- An object or debris is embedded in the wound.
- You think the wound might benefit from stitches (the cut is more than a quarter inch deep, on the face or reaches the bone).
The AMITA Health Orthopedics Institute is a national leader in musculoskeletal care, offering comprehensive and advanced care for a wide range of conditions. We are proactive about keeping you active. That is why our multi-disciplinary orthopedic teams enlist a comprehensive leading edge approach to the prevention, assessment, treatment and rehabilitation of musculoskeletal injuries.

Our team of highly-experienced board-certified physicians, surgeons, therapists and nurses are dedicated to providing patients of all ages with a personalized treatment program that is customized for your condition, lifestyle and personal preferences.

We work hard to prevent sports-related injuries, which have become increasingly more common among athletes, especially children. AMITA Health Sports Medicine Outreach Liaisons keep kids active and participating in the extracurricular activities they enjoy by delivering educational programs and support for parents, coaches and athletes that focus on injury prevention, proper technique and overall athletic care.

For more information, or to contact one of our Sports Medicine Outreach Liaisons, email us at SportsMedicine@amitahealth.org or call us at 847.385.7120 or 708.245.6051