

Bee Stings

Bug bites and stings are, for the most part, no more unpleasant than a homework assignment — kind of annoying but basically harmless.

Occasionally, though, an insect bite or sting can cause serious problems. So you should know when a simple ice pack can bring some relief and when a visit to the local hospital is in order.

Bee and Wasp Stings

For most people, being stung by a bee is a minor nuisance. The affected area may get a little red or swollen and it may be slightly painful, but that's about it.

Bee and wasp stings can cause real problems for people who are allergic, though. A person can get a **localized** allergic reaction (swelling, heat, or itching of the skin around the sting area) or a **systemic** allergic reaction, meaning that the venom causes a reaction throughout the body.

In the case of a [systemic reaction](#), the person may break out in hives. Other symptoms can include wheezing; shortness of breath; rapid heartbeat; faintness; and swelling of the face, lips, throat, or tongue.

If a person has these symptoms, **call 911** immediately. If an epinephrine auto-injector (EpiPen) is available, it should be used right away. It hardly ever happens, but severe allergic reactions to bee and wasp stings can be fatal if the person doesn't get medical help.

Nosebleeds

Sitting in science class one afternoon, you feel your nose begin to run. As you wonder if you're catching a cold, you wipe your nose with a tissue and are shocked to see blood! You have a nosebleed, and if you're like most teens, you may be embarrassed. You might hope no one will notice, and you might be a little scared, too.

Although nosebleeds are usually harmless and easily controlled, it may look like a quart of blood is coming from your nose! Try not to worry — most nosebleeds are easy to stop.

Stopping the Gush

Try these simple tips to stop your nosebleed:

- Get some tissues or a damp cloth to catch the blood.
- Sit up or stand.
- Tilt your head forward and pinch your nostrils together just below the bony center part of your nose. Applying pressure helps stop the blood flow and the nosebleed will usually stop with 10 minutes of steady pressure. Don't stop applying pressure to keep checking if the bleeding has stopped.

If you get a nosebleed, don't blow your nose. Doing so can cause additional nosebleeds. Also, don't tilt your head back. This common practice will cause blood to run into your throat. This can make you cough or choke, and if you swallow a lot of blood, you might begin vomiting.

If you've tried the steps above twice and the bleeding continues after the second attempt, you'll need to see your school nurse or a doctor.

Once you've stopped the initial nosebleed, don't lift heavy objects or do other activities that cause you to strain, and try not to blow your nose for 24 hours.

BURNS

Burns from fire or other sources of heat range from mild to life threatening. Some burns can be treated at home; others need emergency medical care.

Types of Burns



- First-degree burns, usually caused by brief contact with heat, can cause redness, pain, and some swelling.
- Second-degree burns are more severe and usually result in blisters and more intense redness.
- Third-degree burns are the deepest and may be painless due to nerve damage.



What to Do:

If you can't get to a hospital right away or must wait for an ambulance, begin this treatment:

1. Remove clothing from the burned areas. Do not remove clothing that is stuck to the skin and don't break blisters.
2. If it's a first- or second-degree burn, run cool (not cold) water over the burn until the pain lessens. Do not put butter, oil, or ice on burns.
3. Lightly apply a gauze bandage if it's a small first-degree burn.
4. Remove jewelry that's close to the burn.

Seek emergency medical care if:

- it's a second- or third-degree burn
- the burned area is large (cover the area with a clean, soft cloth or towel)
- the burn came from a fire, an electrical wire or socket, or chemicals
- the burn is on the face, scalp, hands, or genitals
- the burn looks infected (with swelling, pus, or increasing redness or red streaking of the skin near the wound)

Broken Bones



A broken bone requires emergency medical care.



It may be a broken bone if:

- you or the person heard a "snap," a grinding noise, or the limb doesn't look straight
- there is swelling, bruising, tenderness, or a feeling of "pins and needles"
- it's painful to put weight on the injured area or to move it



What to Do:

1. Remove clothing from the injured part.
2. Apply a cold compress or ice pack wrapped in cloth.
3. Place a splint on the injured part by:
 - keeping the injured limb in the position you find it
 - placing soft padding around the injured part
 - placing something firm (like a board or rolled-up newspapers) next to the injured part, making sure it's long enough to go past the joints above and below the injury
 - keeping the splint in place with first-aid tape
4. Seek medical care, and don't eat, in case surgery is needed.
5. If you feel faint, put your head between your knees.

Do not move the person - and call for emergency medical care - if:

- the person may have seriously injured the head, neck, or back
- a broken bone comes through the skin (apply constant pressure with a clean gauze pad or thick cloth, and keep the person lying down until help arrives; do not wash the wound or push in any part of the bone that is sticking out)

Scrapes

You wipe out on your skateboard. The knife you're using slices your finger instead of the tomato. Your new puppy doesn't know how sharp his baby teeth are.

You might think a cut or scrape is no big deal, but any time the skin gets broken, there's a risk of infection. So it helps to understand how to care for cuts and scrapes at home — and know when you need to see a doctor.

What to Do

A small cut, scrape, abrasion will usually heal well without medical care. Here's what to do if the injury isn't serious:

- **Stop bleeding by pressing a clean, soft cloth against the wound for a few minutes.** If the wound is bleeding a lot, you'll need to hold pressure for longer (sometimes up to 15 minutes). If the wound is small, the bleeding should stop in a few minutes as the blood's clotting factors do their work to seal the wound.
- **As you keep the pressure on and the wound, avoid the urge to peek.** Lifting the bandage may start the bleeding again.
- **Clean the wound.** Run warm water over the cut for 5 minutes. Then use soap to gently wash the skin around the cut or scrape thoroughly. If there's dirt or debris in the wound (like gravel from a scrape), remove it if you can — a soft, damp cloth can help. Cleaning the wound helps get infection-causing bacteria out of the injured area. *If you can't get all the dirt out, call your doctor's office.*
- **If you want, put a light layer of an antibiotic ointment around the cut to kill germs.** Make sure you're not allergic to the medications in the ointment.
- **Dry the area lightly and cover it with gauze or other type of bandage.** A bandage helps prevent germs from getting into the wound and causing an infection. If the bandage gets wet or dirty, change it right away.
- **Each day, take off the bandage and gently wash the injury.** Watch for signs of infection.
- **To prevent infection and reduce scarring, don't pick at the scab or skin around the wound**

Head Injury

When you injure yourself, it's usually obvious. If you scrape your knee or break your arm, there will be bleeding, bruising, or swelling to show that some part of your body has been damaged.

But when you hurt your brain — what doctors call a **brain injury** or **concussion** — there's often nothing to see. That can be a little scary because brain injuries can be far more serious than a scrape or broken bone.

People hit their heads all the time — during sports, car accidents, and falls. Most of the time, the injuries aren't serious, but it can be hard to know for sure. That's why **every head injury should be treated like a serious injury until a doctor says it's not.**

Signs of a Concussion

If you hit your head and think you might have a concussion, see a doctor right away.

How do you know when it's time to call a doctor? Here are some signs you might have a concussion:

- You feel dizzy after bumping your head, and it goes on for more than a couple of minutes.
- You have a headache that goes on for more than a few minutes.
- Things look blurry or you have trouble focusing.
- You throw up or feel like throwing up.
- You have trouble with balance and coordination (things like not being able to catch a ball or walk in a straight line).
- You have a hard time concentrating, thinking, or making decisions.
- You have trouble speaking or you say things that don't make sense.
- You feel confused, sleepy, grouchy, sad, or emotional for no reason.

You don't have to pass out to have a concussion — in fact, **most people who get concussions *don't* pass out.** But if you *do* pass out after hitting your head, you need to get checked out.

Sometimes a concussion is an emergency. If someone you're with has any of these problems, call 911 or get the person to a hospital emergency room right away:

- The person passed out and can't be woken up.
- The person has seizures.
- The person's speech is slurred.
- The person seems to be getting more confused, restless, sleepy, or agitated.
- The person has thrown up more than once.
- The person has a headache that gets worse or won't go away.