

How to treat abrasions

By Steve Olson

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Abrasion wounds are uncommon injuries in ice hockey. But with summer here, many players are moving outdoors to play In-Line hockey.

Many abrasions can be prevented by wearing protective equipment that covers the vulnerable areas such as the knees, elbows, and shins. Abrasions usually occur when a player makes contact with the playing surface, causing the skin to be scraped away. These injuries are usually minor and do not limit playing time. But if left unattended, they can become infected and be quite uncomfortable.

Adhering to a consistent treatment regimen is the key to preventing infection of an abrasion injury and speeding healing time. Care for an abrasion wound should include:

1. Clean the wound as soon as possible. Remember the surface you are playing on is far from sterile and these germs will go to work on that open wound immediately to cause infection. Remove any visible debris by flushing with fluid and sweeps of gauze.

2. Clean the wound site and area around it



ASK THE DOCTOR

By Dr. Jeff S. Pierce



with an antiseptic solution.

3. Cover the wound with a sterile dressing such as gauze or bandage. You may also want to apply an antibiotic ointment. Many people incorrectly feel you should keep the wound open to let it “air” or “dry” out. The air has no healing properties and contains germs and dirt particles that will only lead to infection. Also, by covering and protecting the wound, it has been shown you will speed the healing time.

4. Change the dressing and clean the wound at least once a day. By keeping the wound covered, you will also prevent it from

sticking to clothing or sheets and becoming re-opened.

5. If the wound is not healing or has debris that does not remove easily you may need to see your physician. A tetanus shot may also be necessary for severe abrasions.

Most abrasions can be prevented with the use of proper equipment. The wounds I have treated usually result during pick-up play where equipment is not required and players are trying to keep cool. By following the above treatment protocol, most abrasions will remain a minor injury and heal nicely.