Puncture Wounds

What is it?

> A wound made by a pointed object such as a nail. knife, or sharp tooth.

Plan of Action:

1. Wash your hands. This helps prevent infection.

2. Stop the bleeding. Apply gentle pressure with a clean bandage or cloth.

3. Clean the wound. Rinse the wound with clear water for 5 to 10 minutes. If dirt or debris remains in the wound, use a washcloth to gently scrub it off. See a doctor if you can't remove all of the dirt or debris.

4. Apply an antibiotic. Apply a thin layer of an antibiotic cream or ointment (Neosporin, Polysporin). For the first two days, rewash the area and reapply the antibiotic when you change the dressing.

5. Cover the wound. Bandages help keep the wound clean.

6. Change the dressing. Do this daily or whenever the bandage becomes wet or dirty.

7. Watch for signs of infection. See a doctor if the wound isn't healing or you notice any increasing pain, pus, swelling or fever. On light skin, spreading redness is a sign of infection. On dark skin, redness may not be apparent, or the infection's streaks may look purplish-gray or darker than your normal skin.

Seek prompt medical care:

- Keeps bleeding after a few minutes of direct pressure
- Is the result of an animal or human bite
- Is deep and dirty
- Is caused by a metal object
- Is deep and to the head, neck, scrotum, chest, or abdomen
- Is over a joint and could be deep

If the injured person hasn't had a tetanus shot in the past five years and the wound is deep or dirty, your doctor may recommend a booster. The injured person should have the booster shot within 48 hours of the injury.

If the wound was caused by a cat or a dog, try to confirm that its rabies vaccination is up to date. If it was caused by a wild animal, seek advice from your doctor about which animals are most likely to carry rabies.

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