



Weekly Safety Briefings

Week 35: August 30 - September 3, 2021

First Aid and Wound Care

Introduction

Many times, the smallest things can have serious impacts on our health. Something as simple as a cut, scrape, abrasion, or puncture has the potential to let in germs and lead to infection. If left untreated, infections can spread to other parts of the body and cause complications.

This week we will provide you with tips on caring for your wounds, how you can decrease the chance of an infection, and what to do if a wound becomes infected.

Monday – First Aid Care

First aid care differs depending on the injury. Treating cuts and scrapes is much different than treating injuries sustained from car or machine accidents.

For minor cuts or scrapes, first aid care is pretty simple.

1. Before you begin cleaning the wound, wash your hands! Touching a fresh wound with dirty hands is an easy way to cause of infection.
2. Once your hands are clean, gently clean the wound with warm water and antibacterial soap.
3. Cover the wound with antibiotic ointment and a bandaid. For shallow or small wounds, leaving them uncovered can help speed up healing time.

For more serious injuries, such as broken bones or amputations, first aid care can get tricky. In the case of a car or machine accident, the first step is to call for emergency response personnel. If there is visible bleeding, apply pressure to the area. Keep the victim awake as you wait for help to arrive.

Tuesday – Decreasing Chance of an Infection

The most important factor in reducing the risk of a wound infection is making sure the area is always clean.

Always cover your wound before beginning any manual or yard work. Do not swim in any bodies of water with an open wound as germs from the water can infect your wound.

For cuts and scrapes on the hands, cover the wound with a band aid before putting gloves on to work. While gloves may protect your hands, they are the perfect breeding ground for bacteria. As you work, your hands may sweat and bacteria can make their way into the wound and cause an infected. When your work day is complete, remove the band aid and clean the wound with warm water and let it breathe.

Wednesday – Signs of an Infection

Wound infections are incredibly common and are usually easy to spot. The following are the most common signs of an infected wound:



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- Increasing tenderness, swelling, redness, or warmth around the wound
- Raised skin around the wound or wound growth
- A red streak spreading from the wound
- Pus or cloudy drainage coming from the wound
- A foul odor or abnormal smell
- Fever or chills
- Blistering or discoloration
- A wound that won't heal
- Swollen lymph nodes

If you have signs and symptoms such as these, seek professional medical care. If you notice that your lymph nodes are swollen, this can indicate the infection is spreading and your body is trying to fight it off.

If your injury is due to a work related incident, make sure to report the symptoms to myour supervisor, manager, or EHS staff.

Thursday – Deep Vein Thrombosis Awareness

Sticking with the medical care theme for the week, let's spend some time discussing Deep Vein Thrombosis. Deep Vein Thrombosis, or DVT, is a blood clot in a deep vein, typically in the legs, that develops from long periods of sitting or inactivity.

Blood clots can form in both superficial and deep veins. In superficial veins, blood clots rarely cause serious problems. However, when a blood clot forms in a deeper vein, immediate medical care is required in order to prevent serious health risks.

Clots that occur in deep veins are dangerous because they can break loose, travel through the bloodstream, and block blood flow to the lungs and other important organs. When blood flow to the lungs is blocked, it is called a pulmonary embolism and is oftentimes life-threatening.

Deep vein thrombosis can also lead to long-lasting problems if there is damage to the vein and can cause leg aches, swelling, and discoloration. If not treated, pain may get worse, last longer, or become constant.

Long distance traveling can often cause blood clots in the legs from long periods of sitting. Whether you are planning to travel by car, plane, or train, consider taking precautions to help prevent blood clots. The following steps are helpful in reducing the risk of DVT:

- Wear loose, comfortable clothes
- Consider buying flight socks or compression stockings
- Store any carryon luggage overhead so you have room to stretch out your legs under the seat in front of you



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- Do anti-DVT exercises. Raise your heels, keeping your toes on the floor, and bring them back down. Do this 10 times. Now raise and lower your toes 10 times. Do this at least every half an hour.
- Walk around whenever you can. If you are in the car, consider pulling over to a rest area and taking some time to stretch your legs. If you are on a plane, walk up and down the aisle to get some blood flow in your legs.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Try to avoid drinking alcohol or taking sleeping pills. This will ensure you don't fall asleep and stay in a static position for too long.

Source: www.webmd.com

Friday – Discussion

In a group, discuss how prepared you feel to deal with first aid emergencies. Do you know what to do? Do you know where the nearest first aid box is within the facility?