

:: Cuts & Lacerations ::

Being inattentive, not using safe procedures when handling sharp objects, or not wearing the correct personal protective equipment (PPE) can contribute to receiving cuts and lacerations both on and off the job.

One of the best ways to avoid a cut or laceration is to wear the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE). Wearing PPE can prevent cuts and lacerations or at the very least minimize them if they should occur.

Another way to avoid cuts and lacerations is to ensure machine guards are in place and not to allow body parts to be in a position where they can contact sharp edges or blades on machinery.

Cuts and lacerations are not only painful but can take up to two weeks to heal. Take the time to prevent cuts and lacerations both on and off the job, and also to remind your co-workers of proper prevention methods if you see them doing something that could result in a cut or laceration.

Prevention of cuts and lacerations

Wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for the job being done.

- **Cotton or Canvas Gloves:** General work gloves for parts handling, general maintenance. Provide abrasion resistance.
- **Leather Gloves:** Mild heat resistance and good abrasion resistance.

When cutting materials:

- Always cut away from the body.
- Cut with even pressure.

Use the proper instrument for the job being completed (e.g. knives should not be used as screwdrivers and vice versa).

Medical information

Probable Outcome

Lacerations usually heal in two weeks if they are sutured properly and do not become infected.

Treatment

Basic First Aid

For minor cuts:

- Hold the wounded area under running water and clean with mild soap.

- Pat the skin dry.
- Hold the edges of a shallow straight cut together with tape/band-aid stretched across the laceration.
- Apply a sterile dressing.

For serious cuts and “brisk” bleeding:

- Cover the injured area with a cloth or your bare hands if no cloth is available.
- Apply strong pressure directly to the laceration for 10 minutes while awaiting an ambulance or transportation to an emergency room.
- If direct pressure doesn’t control extremely heavy bleeding and bleeding is from an arm or leg, elevate the area (if possible) or use a “pressure bandage.”

For wound care without brisk bleeding:

- Clean the wound carefully with soap and water.
- The wound will be cleaned again and sutured in the doctor’s office or an emergency medical facility usually under local anesthesia (if necessary).
- Keep the wound covered with a bandage and moderate compression for two days to help prevent fluid collection under the sutures.
- If the bandage gets wet, replace it and apply non-prescription antibiotic ointment.
- If bleeding occurs after suturing, control it by applying firm pressure to the wound with a facial tissue or clean cloth. Hold the pressure for 10 minutes.
- Prevent tetanus by getting a booster dose of tetanus toxoid (if recommended by physician).
- Protect a laceration with extra padding during contact sports until it heals.

Call your doctor if

- Pain, swelling, redness, drainage, or bleeding increases in the wound area.
- You develop signs of infection: headache, muscle aches, dizziness or a general ill feeling and fever.