

Urgent Care for Your Child's Accidents and Roughhousing

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No matter how safe parents try to make a child's environment, toddlers, teens and tweens seem to find a thousand different ways to get hurt between school, playground and soccer field. When that happens, it can be terrifying for parent, as well as child. Parents must quickly transition from being "milk-serving" moms and "play ball" dads to triage specialists. Quick decisions must first be made to stop the flow of blood and then to where the most appropriate treatment can be found. All the while, parents must maintain a sense of calm and control while a child cries out in fear.

Doing nothing is not an option, because treatment is imperative with deep lacerations. "Your child's skin is the barrier to the outside world so all lacerations should be addressed quickly, to prevent risk of serious infection or other health complications," explains Robert Hage, MD Now Urgent Care Physician Training Program Director. Hage goes on to say that remains the same for facial wounds, "Immediate response is vital to maintain the cosmetic and functional integrity of your child's face and eyes."

Methods for Wound Closure

No two injuries are exactly the same, so it's important to consult a doctor for personalized treatment. Urgent care centers like MD Now are equipped to treat your child's cuts and wounds with a wide variety of options for wound closure, but many of those methods are puzzling for parents. This primer about wound closure methods will help.



Sutures – Between emergency rooms and urgent care centers, sutures remain the preferred method for everyday wound repair. Your doctor will apply a local anesthetic around the laceration, clean the wound, and then simply stitch together the skin. Usually, you will be asked to return to the doctor's office within five to ten days so they can remove the stitches and make sure the wound is healing properly. Sutures come in a variety of thread gauges to ensure maximum mobility and functionality of the injured area.

Staples – Staples are one of the fastest techniques for wound closure, an invaluable resource for parents with squirmy kids. Like sutures, staples have a low risk of infection with minimal inflammation, but can be more expensive than traditional sutures. Most doctors prefer using staples for head injuries because the hair grows back quickly to cover any scars or marks left by stapling. Staples can also be used on your extremities when the wound needs to be closed as quickly as possible.

SteriStrips – These thin, adhesive strips generically, known as "butterfly" stitches, can be used to close small wounds. Your doctor applies the strips over the laceration to pull the skin on either side of the wound closed. SteriStrips can be used in place of sutures to reduce scarring in less severe injuries. Additionally, the procedure does not require any anesthetic and SteriStrips provide for easy care. Your doctor may also use SteriStrips to reinforce a wound previously closed by sutures or staples.

Sterile Glue – Dermabond® is a sterile liquid skin adhesive that holds edges of a wound together. Sterile glue is designed for low-tension areas, such as the forehead, eyebrows, and around the eyes. Dermabond® requires no anesthesia and can be a less scary alternative for children than sutures or staples.

When to Seek Emergency Care



When a laceration occurs at home, you can take several first-aid steps. Stop bleeding with direct pressure to the area around the wound and elevate the injured part of the body until you can seek urgent or emergency care.

If a child has more than a simple paper cut, it's best to seek medical attention to prevent infection or other serious complications. An urgent care facility will want to see your child if he or she has any of the following types of lacerations:

- Wounds that are more than 0.25 inches (6.5 mm) deep, that have jagged edges or that gape open
- Deep wounds where you can see bone, fat, muscle, joint structures, etc.
- Facial wounds or lacerations around the eyes
- A foreign object embedded into the cut
- Wounds that have ongoing bleeding that does not stop after 15 minutes of direct pressure

"Rarely will a child move on to adulthood without having stitches or a broken bone at some point," explains Hage. "Considering those odds, your worries about a fall or cut becoming a commentary on your parenting



skills are fruitless. Instead, spend more time locating your closest urgent care center, learning what to do in case of an emergency and enjoying your carefree children."