

WOUND CARE



The risk for injury is increased during and after a natural disaster. Floodwaters and standing waters pose various risks, including infectious diseases, chemical hazards, and injuries. Prompt first aid can help heal small wounds and prevent infection.

Use these steps to protect yourself and your family:



Avoid contact with flood waters, especially if you have an open wound



Cover clean, open wounds with a waterproof bandage to reduce chance of infection



Keep open wounds as clean as possible by washing thoroughly with soap and clean water



Seek immediate medical care if a wound develops redness, swelling, oozing, or other signs of infection, such as fever, increasing pain, shortness of breath, fast heart rate, confusion or disorientation, or high heart rate

Seek medical attention as soon as possible if:

- There is a foreign object (soil, wood, metal, or other objects) embedded in the wound
- Wound is infected (pain and soreness, swelling, redness, draining, or you develop a fever)
- Wound is a result of a puncture by a dirty object
- Wound is a result of an animal bite
- You have signs of sepsis, such as confusion or disorientation, shortness of breath, high heart rate, fever or shivering, extreme pain or discomfort, or clammy/sweaty skin

If you receive a puncture wound or a wound contaminated with feces, soil, or saliva, have a health care professional determine whether a tetanus booster is necessary based on individual records.

Take care of wounds:



- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and clean water, if possible
- Avoid touching the wound with your fingers while treating it. If possible, use disposable gloves
- Remove obstructive jewelry and clothing from the injured body part
- Apply direct pressure to any bleeding wound to control bleeding
- Clean the wound after bleeding has stopped
- Check the wound for dirt and foreign objects
- Gently flood the wound with bottled water or clean running water (if available, saline solution is preferred)
- Gently clean around the wound with soap and clean water
- Pat dry and apply an adhesive bandage or dry clean cloth
- Leave unclean wounds, bites, and punctures open. Wounds that are not cleaned correctly can trap bacteria and result in infection
- Provide pain relievers when possible
- Monitor the wound every 24 hours for signs of infection