

# Puncture Wound

## Definition

- The skin is punctured by a pointed narrow object (such as a needle)
- The skin opening is very small and often closed
- Puncture wounds that contain splinters or slivers are covered elsewhere

## Health Information

### Symptoms

- The main symptom is a little bleeding.
- Puncture wounds are also painful.

### Causes

- Commonly caused by a nail, sewing needle, pin, tack, pencil, toothpick.
- Pencil lead is actually graphite (harmless), not poisonous lead. Even colored leads are not toxic.

### Prevention

- Careful adult supervision of young children
- Education of older children about high risk behaviors

## Care Advice

1. **Overview:**
  - Most puncture wounds do not need to be seen.
  - The main risk is becoming infected.
  - Here is some care advice that should help.
2. **Cleansing:**
  - First wash off the dirty foot or hand with soap and water.
  - Then soak the puncture wound in some clean warm soapy water for 15 minutes.
  - For any dirt or debris, scrub the wound surface back and forth. Use a wash cloth to remove any dirt.
  - If the wound re-bleeds a little, that may help remove germs.
  - Washing the wound right away can prevent infections.
3. **Antibiotic Ointment:**
  - Use an antibiotic ointment such as Polysporin. No prescription is needed.
  - Then, cover with a Band-Aid to reduce the risk of infection.
  - Re-wash the wound and put on antibiotic ointment every 12 hours.
  - Do this for 2 days.
4. **Pain Medicine:**
  - To help with the pain, give acetaminophen (such as Tylenol) or ibuprofen. Use as needed.

5. **Tetanus Shot:**

- A tetanus shot update may be needed for a puncture wound.
- Check your vaccine records to see when your child got the last one.
- If last tetanus shot was given over 5 years ago, your child needs a booster.
- See your child's doctor for a booster during regular office hours. It's safe to give it within 3 days or less.

6. **What to Expect:**

- Puncture wounds seal over in 1 to 2 hours.
- Pain should go away within 2 days.

## Call Your Doctor If

- You can't remove the object that punctured the skin
- Dirt in the wound still there after 15 minutes of scrubbing
- Pain becomes severe
- Looks infected (redness, red streaks, pus, fever)
- You think your child needs to be seen
- Your child becomes worse

### Pediatric Care Advice

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