



## Kid First Aid

### Treating Common Problems

#### Fevers

Fevers are the body's natural defense mechanism to fight infection. Although many parents are understandably concerned when their children become ill with fevers, they are actually helpful in ridding the body of excess heat through sweating. When your child has a fever, *don't* overdress him, but *do* keep the room at a comfortable, cooler temperature. Give plenty of liquids to prevent dehydration (Water, gelatin and clear soup are best). You may give your child a tepid bath & medication to reduce the fever. Call the doctor when a fever is over 102 F and your child is crying or whining a lot, cries when you touch or move him, or if he is unable to swallow. Follow your doctor's advice.

#### Cuts and scrapes

If an injury barely breaks the skin, wash the area with soap and water, pat it dry, and apply antibiotic ointment (such as Bacitracin or Neosporin) to prevent infection. Cover with a clean bandage and change the dressing every day. For deeper wounds, apply direct pressure with sterile gauze or a clean cloth. Elevate the injured limb above the heart to control bleeding. Once the bleeding stops, gently rinse the area with water. Never clean deeps gashes and cuts with soap or apply antiseptic, both can damage healthy tissue. Call the doctor if the cut is more than 1/8-inch deep, gaping open, or doesn't stop bleeding after 5 minutes; if you notice signs of infection (redness, pus, swelling, fever) or if your child isn't up to date on tetanus shots (given at 2, 4, and 6 months; 15 to 18 months; and 4 to 6 years).

#### Sprains

To reduce swelling, wrap a towel around a bag of ice and leave it on the sore joint for 20-minute intervals. Wrapping the limb in an Ace bandage and keeping it elevated will also help. Rest the joint if possible. Call the doctor if you suspect a fracture.



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## **Splinters**

Soak the area in warm water and pull out the splinter with sterilized tweezers. If the splinter is still embedded, numb the area with ice, then dislodge it with a sterilized needle. Wash the wound with soapy water and an antibiotic cream. Call the doctor if the area becomes infected.

## **Bruises/Head Injury**

Apply an ice pack, wrapped in a soft cloth, to the sore area for about 20 minutes to reduce pain and swelling. Call the doctor if your child bruises his head, vomits, won't wake up, is sensitive to light, feels dizzy, complains of a headache, or loses consciousness. Call right away if your child can't move the injured body part.

## **Bug bites and stings**

Scrape away the stinger using your fingernail. If your child can't stop scratching, give him a cough or cold medication that contains an antihistamine, and apply a paste of baking soda and water to the sore area 2 to 3 times a day (for a bee sting, rub on a little ammonia diluted with water). Ibuprofen can help reduce swelling. Call the doctor immediately if your child has a severe allergic reaction (difficulty breathing, loss of consciousness) or if pain and swelling persist for more than 72 hours.

## **Plant rash**

To treat Poison oak, ivy or sumac, apply calamine lotion several times a day. Hydrocortisone cream or a paste of baking soda mixed with water is also effective. Call the doctor if the rash is on the face or extensively covers the body, is infected (blisters, oozes pus) or is accompanied by a fever; cortisone injections may be necessary to reduce inflammation. An oral antihistamine such as Benadryl or Chlortrimeton can help control the itching. Read warning labels carefully.

## **Burns**

With any burn, by acting quickly you can minimize possible complications and discomfort. A first-degree burn results in redness and discomfort. A second-degree burn involves blistering, plus redness and pain. If your child has a first or second-degree burn, your first move is to cool the burned skin by holding the burned area under cold tap water for ten minutes. Cover the burn with cortisone cream and a clean bandage. The bandage protects the burn from exposure to air, which causes burns to hurt. Extensive burns require immediate medical attention. Cover the burn with a clean wet cloth and seek the care of a doctor.

## **Sunburns**

Apply a cool compress or have the child soak in a tepid bath with 1/4-cup baking soda and cornstarch. If you have an aloe vera plant or gel, squeeze a small amount of the leaf's gel on your finger and spread gently over infected sunburned skin. Seek advice from a doctor if you see blisters.

Produced by

**PARTNERS IN PARENTING (PIP) (800) 457-2736**

Colorado Family Education, Resources & Training

Colorado State University Cooperative Extension

Funded by the Alcohol & Drug Abuse Division and CSAP

Information for this PIP TIP collected from a variety of research based resources.

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