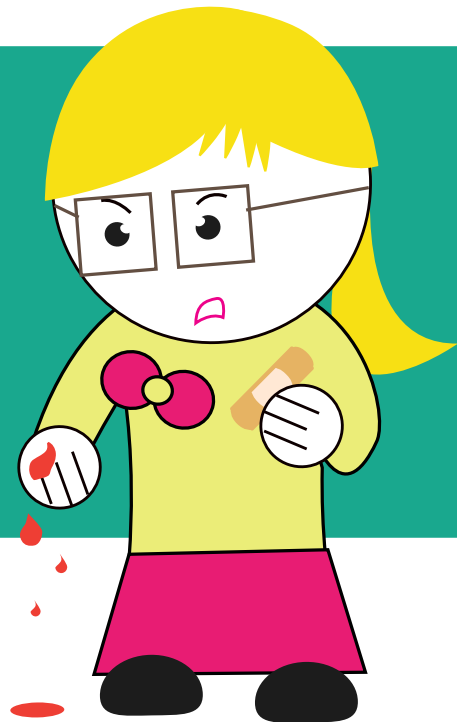


Cuts & grazes

Cuts and grazes are a common type of injury and in most cases do not pose a threat to health. Most cuts and grazes are minor and can be easily treated at home. Cleaning them thoroughly and covering them with a plaster or dressing is all that is needed.



Stopping the bleeding

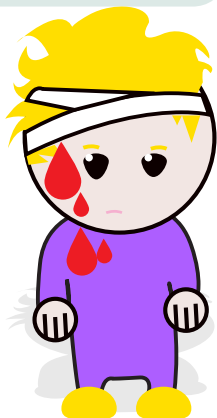
If your cut or graze is bleeding heavily or is on a particularly delicate area of your body, like the palm of your hand, you should stop the bleeding before applying any kind of dressing. Apply pressure to the area using a bandage or a towel. If the cut is to your hand or arm, raise it above your head. If the injury is to a lower limb, lie down and raise the affected area above the level of your heart so the bleeding slows down and stops.

Dressing

To dress a cut or graze at home:

- Wash and dry your hands thoroughly
- Clean the wound under running tap water but do not use antiseptic because it may damage the tissue and slow down healing
- Pat the area dry with a clean towel
- Apply a sterile, adhesive dressing, like a plaster

Keep the dressing clean by changing it as often as necessary and keep the wound dry by using waterproof dressings, which will allow you to take showers.



Painkillers

The wound should heal by itself in a few days. If the wound is painful, you can take painkillers, like paracetamol or ibuprofen.

When to see your GP

You only need to see your GP if there is a risk of a cut or graze becoming infected or you think it already has become infected. You are more at risk of the wound becoming infected if:

- It has been contaminated with soil, pus, bodily fluids or faeces (poo)
- There was something in the wound before it was cleaned, like a tooth or a shard of glass
- The wound has a jagged edge
- The wound is longer than 5cm (2 inches)

You should also contact your GP if your skin has been bitten (either by an animal or a person) as bites are prone to infection. An infected wound can usually be treated with a short course of antibiotics.



For more information, help and support go to www.choosewellmanchester.org.uk or visit NHS Choices at www.nhs.uk

Choose the right care

What to do next...



Choose care at home if...

- You have a cut or graze that is less than 5cm (2 inches) long
- You are able to fully clean the cut before dressing it



Choose your GP surgery if...

- The affected area starts to swell up
- You have pus forming in the affected area
- There is any redness spreading from the cut or graze
- You have increasing pain in the wound
- You start to feel generally unwell
- You have a high temperature (fever) of 38°C (100.4°F) or above
- You have swollen glands



Call 999 A&E if...

- You are bleeding from a cut artery. Blood from an artery comes out in spurts (with each beat of the heart), is bright red and is usually hard to control
- You cannot stop the bleeding
- You experience loss of sensation near the wound or you are having trouble moving body parts. If this is the case you may have damaged underlying nerves
- There is severe pain, extensive bruising and you are having trouble moving body parts. If this is the case you may have damaged one of your tendons
- You have received a cut to the face. You may require urgent treatment to prevent scarring
- You have received a cut to the palm of your hand and the cut looks infected. These types of infection can spread quickly
- There is a possibility that a foreign body is still inside the wound
- The cut is extensive, complex or has caused a lot of tissue damage



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Choose the right care