

Road Rash Wound Care

Cycling can be dangerous, with crashing a possibility. Most is minor, and what is called "Road Rash." Road Rash is a scraping of the skin from a fall on the ground or pavement.

Scrapes (according to webMD.com) are skin wounds that rub or tear off skin. Most crash type scrapes are shallow & do not extend far into the skin, but some may remove several layers. Usually there is a little bleeding from a scrape, and it may ooze a pinkish fluid. Most scrapes are minor, so home treatment is usually all that is needed to care for the wound.

Scrapes can occur on any part of the body but usually affect bony areas, such as the hands, forearms, elbows, knees, or shins. Scrapes on the head or face may appear worse than they are and bleed a lot because of the ample blood supply to these areas. Controlling the bleeding will allow you to determine the seriousness of the injury. Scrapes are usually more painful than cuts because scrapes tear a larger area of skin and expose more nerve endings.

How a scrape heals depends on the depth, size, and location of the scrape. Occasionally, the injury that caused the scrape will also have caused a cut or several cuts that may need to be treated by a health professional.

5 Quick Care Steps

Step 1. ASSESS DAMAGE.

Assess your situation. Do not forget to move yourself and your bike out of harms way. Assess your wounds. You want to clean the wound and stop the bleeding. Determine if there is cause for you to seek a health care professional. If you think no other tissues, such as blood vessels, nerves, tendons, ligaments, joints, bones, or internal organs, have been injured, then you can care for this wound by yourself. The best time to treat skin abrasion injuries is immediately after they happen.

Step 2. CLEAN THE WOUND

Use an Antiseptic to soak and clean the injury. Some brands will help numb the wound so you can better clean it. Water from your water bottle works if you don't have an antiseptic. Thoroughly cleanse any dirt from the wound area. Try to get out foreign debris now, while it's fresh. You need to get rid of debris to help prevent infections (both bacterial skin infections and tetanus, or lockjaw). Use a t-shirt to scrub if you don't have any first aid. This prevents your body from sealing in the dirt, decreasing your chances of getting a "dirt tattoo". If you



American Red Cross

Being active, with a lifetime activity like cycling is a great lifestyle choice. But with being active there is a risk of injury. Basic First-Aid and CPR knowledge is very important. Consider taking a course, as there are many offered by the American Red Cross.

American Red Cross first aid, CPR and AED programs are designed to give you the confidence to respond in an emergency situation with skills that can save a life.

Additional training in bloodborne pathogens, oxygen administration and injury prevention can be added to CPR and first aid training to prepare you to prevent and respond to life-threatening emergencies.

Red Cross Preparedness programs in first aid, CPR and AED are available for any age and can be tailored to the needs of specific groups and individuals. Whether you work with children, want training for employees, are a professional rescuer, or simply want to know how to help someone in an emergency, the American Red Cross has a program for you. Find out more about the American Red Cross Advantage.

American Red Cross

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have a First Aid "Crash Pak" use it now. It contains everything you need to clean and bandage a large skin abrasion injury. If not, do the best you can with what you have. Try to keep the wound covered and moist until you can get to the shower or the ER. If wound is still bleeding, apply compression until the blood flows stops. In a luke warm shower, gently but thoroughly scrub the wound. It's going to hurt but it's necessary to get out all the debris that could cause infection or get healed into the wound. Use a mild anti-bacterial soap and soft loofah sponge or cotton wash cloth.

Careful not to start the bleeding again. Gently tap dry with a paper towel.

Step 3. APPLY ANTIBIOTIC

Apply a generous layer of an Antibiotic ointment to your freshly scrubbed wound. This creates a moist layer over the wound that prevents it from drying out and forming a scab. Your chances of scarring are greatly reduced using this moist wound healing method. Cover and keep applying the ointment two or three times a day until the wound turns pink.

Step 4. BANDAGE THE WOUND

Cover with a non-stick gauze or hydro-gel. Keep wounds covered until they heal and turn pink (about seven to twelve days depending on the severity of the injury). Change your dressings no more than once a day. If the wound begins to ooze, don't worry. This goo is naturally pH balanced to your skin and helps fight infection. It also is rich with collagen and the skin cells that are working to re-surface the wounded area. Basically, you need to keep wounds covered and moist until they heal.

Step 5. PROTECT THE WOUND

When your wounds have safely made it past the point of infection and scabbing, there's still a chance of scarring. Much of scarring is genetically predetermined but you can do a lot to help prevent wound discoloration by applying a good sunscreen every time you go out into the sun. This is the time the wound has a pinkish, transparent look and you are no longer using dressing. If the wound does not appear to be healing, seek professional medical help as soon as possible.

Please note: Always consult a Doctor before and after wound care

Your Cycling First Aid Kit

You can make your own, or there are a few cycling-specific kits on the market. Either way, having such a kit with you in the car or in your race bag at the track is a great thing to have when you need it. Use a clear see through type bag to hold what you need. This is especially true if you need particular medications of some sort.

Think of having:

- + First Aid Book
- + Chemical cold pack
- + rubber gloves
- + Antibiotic ointment (e.g. Polysporin)

- + Iodine swabs
- + Alcohol swabs/antiseptic towelettes
- + Q-tips
- + Band Aids of various sizes
- + Medical tape
- + Elastic bandages
- + Gauze bandages & Gauze pads
- + Transparent dressings
- + Sting/Allergy kit(s)
- + Safety pins
- + Scissors
- + Tweezers
- + Emergency Contact(s) & Insurance Carrier Information

Such a First Aid kit could be in demand, if not by you, but maybe a team mate. Be aware of, and try to reduce the risks of infectious diseases by eliminating direct exposure of yourself and others to blood & other bodily fluids. It is just good health practice (even with team mates).



Whitey's Crash & Burn Kit

This kit was designed by Whitey DeBroux, a pro cyclist and full time fire fighter/EMT, to provide the same wound care available to the pros. You will find similar products in an

ER or Pro team bus. We hope you'll never need it, but at some point you may be happy to have it!
www.ExcelSports.com -- \$29.95

The Brave Soldier Crash Pak™ kit

contains everything you need to effectively treat a common road rash injury immediately after crashing.

Proper use of this kit helps prevent abrasions from healing with dirt & debris embedded in the wound. Compact packaging stows away perfectly in any jersey pocket or backpack.

\$15.00, from www.bravesoldier.com

