

# Handling Common Summer Injuries in Children

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As the temperature rises and days get longer, you're probably looking forward to a carefree summer. But a variety of childhood injuries can come along with outdoor playtime. Here's how to manage these common wounds of summer:

## Minor bumps and bruises

Place a cold compress or ice pack on the injury to limit swelling and relieve pain. Give your child acetaminophen for the pain, if needed. Follow the package directions according to your child's weight, and never exceed the maximum daily dosage. Watch him or her for the next 24 hours, and call your health care provider right away if your child has unusual symptoms such as vomiting, unfocused eyes or abnormal walking.

## Cuts and scrapes

Clean the wound and skin around the injury with soap and cool water on a soft cloth. Remove debris with tweezers cleaned with isopropyl alcohol. Cover the wound with a clean cloth or gauze, and press gently to stop any bleeding. Lightly dab on an antibiotic ointment, and cover the wound with a bandage to ward off infection and keep it clean. Call your doctor if the cut is deep and the edges are jagged.

## Bites and stings

Most reactions to insect bites and stings are mild with only itching, stinging or swelling that goes away in a day. If your child is stung, scrape or brush off the stinger with a straight-edged object like a credit card. Don't try to pull or tweeze the stinger out because that will release the venom. Gently wash the area with soap and water. Use an ice pack to reduce your child's pain or swelling. Dab the bite with hydrocortisone cream or calamine lotion to calm the itch. Give your child an antihistamine formulated for his or her weight. Seek emergency care immediately if your child's face swells or if he or she is wheezing, has difficulty breathing, looks pale or has stomach pain.

## Blisters

If your child's new summer sandals leave a painful blister, cover the blister with a bandage or gauze to relieve friction. Don't drain it unless it's painful. In that case, wash the area with soap and warm water and swab the blister with iodine or rubbing alcohol. Relieve the pressure by puncturing the blister with a sterilized needle in several spots near its edge. After draining the blister, leave the overlying skin in place. Apply an antibiotic ointment and cover it with a clean bandage. Call your doctor if you see signs of infection like pus or redness, or if your child complains of increasing pain.

## Sunburn

To reduce pain and swelling, give your child a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medication like ibuprofen. Apply a towel soaked in cool water or give your child a cool bath to calm the burn. Apply a moisturizing lotion or cream. Have your child drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration. Don't break blisters unless they're painful. Cover them with gauze, and if they break on their own, apply antibacterial ointment.

**ExpressMed, a service of Morton Hospital's Emergency Department, is available for children and adults with non-urgent illnesses or injuries. ExpressMed offers services from 8 am – 12:30 am daily, and patients receive speedy and efficient care for symptoms like sore throats, sprains and earaches, as well as injuries like the ones listed above. For more information about our ExpressMed services, visit [www.steward.org/Morton](http://www.steward.org/Morton).**

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