Cuts and Scrapes

A cut or scrape is a break in the skin. Cuts may or may not need stitches to heal. Because the skin is our body's best germ protector, when the skin is broken, germs can get into the body and cause an infection.

If your child has a cut or scrape, be sure to check daily for these signs of infection:

- Your child has a fever.
- Red streaks appear around the cut or scrape.
- Yellow or green thick liquid oozes from the cut or scrape.
- The cut begins to hurt more or the cut area is warmer than normal.
- Part of the body below the cut or scrape is numb or swollen. For example, the cut or scrape is on the wrist, and the hand is numb or swollen.

If your child has a cut or scrape that does not need stitches:

- Clean the cut area gently with soap and warm water.
- Check the cut and skin for objects, like dirt, gravel or glass.
- Cover the cut with a bandage or gauze dressing.
- Keep the cut area and dressing dry.
- Check the cut area daily for signs of infection.

Some cuts may need stitches, staples, or skin glue (Dermabond®) to hold them closed until they heal. Cuts on the face and cuts that are deep, big, or crooked may need stitches. Stitches are made with special thread that closes the cut so it will heal. Two types of special thread may be used.

- One type of thread is absorbable. The body uses all of the thread as it heals.
- The other is thread made from silk or nylon. Stitches with this type of thread need to be removed by a doctor or nurse as the cut heals. If left in too long, they can cause the skin to become infected or badly scarred.

When your child has a cut that needs stitches or staples, you should:

- Take him to see a doctor within 6 hours of the injury.
- Keep the cut area and dressing clean and dry until a doctor or nurse takes the stitches out.
- Use a cotton swab and peroxide to carefully clean the cut and get dried blood off the skin between the stitches.
- Avoid soaking the cut area in water. For example, no swimming or soaking the cut area in bath or dish water.
Dressing Instructions:

[ ] Check the cut area daily for signs of infection.

[ ] Find out when and where you should bring your child back to have the stitches or staples taken out.

[ ] He needs the stitches removed on _____/_____/.____.

[ ] Your child’s appointment is on _____/_____/.____ at _________ in the ___________________. Be sure to keep this appointment!

Call your child’s doctor or the Children’s Mercy Hospital Information Line at (816) 234-3188 if:

- Your child shows signs of infection.
- His stitches fall out before his follow-up appointment.
- You miss your return appointment.