

At Home First Aid for Wounds:

First, it is important to know that if you plan on managing this wound without consultation of a veterinarian, it is critical to see daily improvement with the wound and a scab should form within several days. If this has not occurred, it is important that you schedule an appointment as soon as possible to prevent further complications to the wound healing process.

Many people do not understand that there are specific stages to wound healing that require specific adjustments to how we treat the wound to ensure it heals without complications. Your veterinarian is fully educated on these stages and can help ensure your pet's wound heals with minimal complications or can at least be there to assist you if there are complications.

TAKE A PICTURE!!! This is so helpful to take a picture on day 1 and then every few days. This will help you to see if the wound is healing and help your veterinarian in case they need to get involved.

NOTE: if you cannot get the wound to stop bleeding or if you can see any exposed bone, tendons or ligaments, cover the wound (apply pressure if it is bleeding) and go directly to a 24 hour emergency clinic for immediate care.

Key point: before touching the wound, clean your hands or wear gloves to prevent bringing bacteria from your hands into the wound

Here are some steps for treating simple wounds:

- 1) Clean the wound with dilute chlorhexidine or betadine and water (can use a syringe to flush water onto the wound)
 - a. **NOTE:** you may use peroxide if you do not have chlorhexidine or betadine.
 - b. It is important to understand to **ONLY** use these products when initially cleaning the wound but **NOT** after the initial cleaning of the wound. These products are meant to kill bacteria but they also kill healthy healing cells. So, if you continue to use these products you will actually prevent the wound from healing.
- 2) Clip hair away from around the wound. Do **NOT** use scissors.
 - a. Be careful not to get hair into the wound. If you do, simply rinse out with water.
- 3) Depending on the size and location of the wound, a bandage may be necessary to stop bleeding and prevent further infection of the wound.
 - a. See guide on how to place a bandage
- 4) Daily wound care.
 - a. Once a wound is clean, many wounds are best **LEFT ALONE** to heal.
 - b. Ensure the wound is clean of dirt and debris.
- 5) Tool Box:
 - a. Bandage materials: Non-adherent gauze, roll gauze, vet wrap
 - b. Cleaning wounds: Chlorhexidine, betadine, or hydrogen peroxide
 - c. Daily topical treatment: Vetericyn Spray (this can be found at Tractor Supply)
 - d. Ointments-**NOT RECOMMENDED**, most ointments prevent healing by not allowing oxygen to the wound and holding bacteria in the wound.

- **Biggest problems with wound healings:**

- YOUR PET! They won't stop licking it! Depending on the location of the wound, this may require a special collar to prevent them from licking, applying t-shirts or covering the wound a way where your pet cannot get to it.
- Bandaging wounds, although applying a bandage prevents dirt and debris from getting in the wound it also prevents oxygen from getting to the wound which helps the wound heal. The bandage also traps bacteria and moisture in the wound and often prevents healing. I often recommend just covering the wound when the pet goes outside to prevent it from getting dirty and then removing the bandage when they come inside to allow air to get to the wound.
- Overuse of hydrogen peroxide, ointments or any topical solutions. These can prevent the wound from healing by not allowing oxygen to the area and killing off healthy healing cells.