

Ear Injury

Definition

- Injuries to the outer ear, ear canal or eardrum

Health Information

Types of Ear Injuries

- Bruises and scratches of outer ear
- Blood clot of outer ear
- Ear canal bleeding due to scratch of ear canal. This can be caused by cotton swab, fingernail, or ear exam.
- Punctured eardrum due to long-pointed objects. Examples are cotton swabs, pencils, sticks, straws, or wires.
- Cotton swabs cause over 10,000 ear injuries each year in the US. Over 2,000 are punctured eardrums.

Symptoms

- The main symptom is pain.

Prevention

- Careful adult supervision of young children
- Never let young children put Q-tips in their ears
- Education of older children about high risk behaviors

Care Advice

1. **Bleeding:**
 - For any bleeding, put direct pressure on the wound.
 - Use a gauze pad or clean cloth.
 - Press for 10 minutes or until the bleeding has stopped.
2. **Cleansing:**
 - Wash the wound with soap and water for 5 minutes.
3. **Antibiotic Ointment:**
 - For cuts and scrapes, use an antibiotic ointment such as Polysporin. No prescription is needed.
 - Put it on the cut 3 times a day.
 - Do this for 3 days.
 - Cover large scrapes with a Band-Aid. Change daily.
4. **Pain Medicine:**
 - To help with the pain, give acetaminophen (such as Tylenol) or ibuprofen. Use as needed.
5. **What to Expect:**
 - Minor ear wounds heal quickly.
 - Most often, cuts and scrapes heal in 2 or 3 days.

Call Your Doctor If

- Pain becomes severe
- Wound looks infected
- You think your child needs to be seen
- Your child becomes worse

Pediatric Care Advice

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