

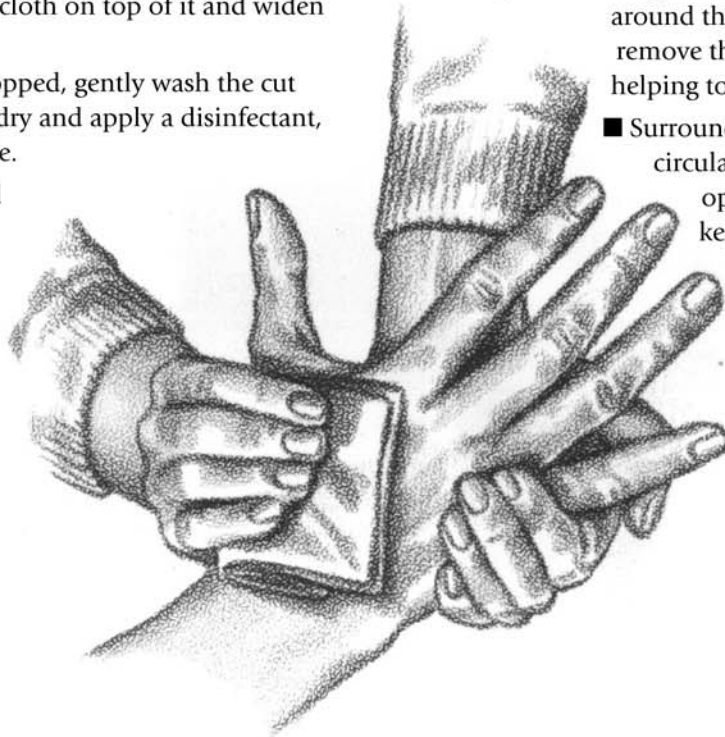
Bleeding

How to Stop It

Bleeding can be frightening and dramatic. However, in most cases it's not life-threatening if it's treated right away. Here are some self-care and first aid tips.

For a Small Cut or Puncture Wound

- If there's no large foreign object in the wound, put a sterile cloth, such as gauze, a clean handkerchief or even a clean pillow case over the wound and apply pressure. Avoid cotton, paper towels or tissue, since their fibers can get in the wound. If a cloth isn't available, clean your hands well and use your fingers.
- Elevate the bleeding area above the heart, if possible.
- If blood soaks through a bandage or cloth, don't remove it. Apply another cloth on top of it and widen the area of pressure.
- Once the bleeding has stopped, gently wash the cut with soap and water, pat dry and apply a disinfectant, such as hydrogen peroxide.
- After the cut or superficial puncture is cleaned and disinfected, remove any small foreign object, such as glass or a splinter, if it isn't deeply imbedded. Once it's removed, disinfect the wound again and apply a bandage for any new bleeding.
- If the bleeding doesn't stop within 45 minutes, dial 911 or whatever emergency medical service is in your area.



For Heavy Bleeding or a Large Foreign Object in the Skin

- Have the victim lie down.
- Remove clothing from around the wound if you can do so quickly.
- You can detect bleeding in the dark, such as after an outdoor accident at night, by feeling all over and under the body for patches of sticky dampness.
 - Squeeze the edges of a wound together around the object. Never try to remove the object since it may be helping to plug the wound.
- Surround the wound with a thick circular pad of clean cloth. An opening in the center helps keep pressure off the foreign object.
- Use parallel bandages to hold this donut-shaped material in place over the wound until emergency medical help can treat it.

While Waiting for Emergency Care

If the bleeding won't stop, as a last resort you can temporarily cut off much of the blood supply to a limb by firmly pressing major arteries against an underlying bone with your fingers. Pressure points include the underside of the upper arm and in the center of the fold of the groin.

WARNING: Don't maintain maximum pressure for longer than five minutes and don't apply a tourniquet.
