

Think Sharp!

Wounds from sharp objects

Wounds from sharp objects around the home, school and workplace can include:

- cuts (slices from blades or sharp edges)
- punctures (piercings with objects such as nails, needles or splinters)
- lacerations ('jagged' cuts in which the tissue has been torn).

These are usually painful and cause bleeding. Minor wounds to the surface of the skin that are not a threat to your health are called 'superficial', but some wounds are severe, cutting into veins, muscles and even bones. Any break to the skin's surface can become infected, as germs can enter the body.

Examples of risks:

Knives, razors, broken glass, sharp edges (e.g. on furniture, can lids or paper), stationery (e.g. compasses, staplers), tools (e.g. tweezers, saws, gardening forks), electrical devices with blades (e.g. food processors, hedge trimmers)



Key safety messages for the home and workplace:

- Practise using sharp objects with care and concentration. Always read any instructions before you use them, particularly with electrical tools.
- Lock or store sharp objects away safely after use – remember that they're dangerous for young children and pets, if left out.
- Keep sharp objects sharp (so they don't slip when cutting), as well as clean and free from rust.
- Dispose of sharp objects safely. Wrap them before putting them in the bin, so they don't harm anyone else. Use a dustpan and brush to clear up broken glass – not your hands!

Basic First Aid

- Whoever is dealing with the wound should clean their hands thoroughly and use disposable gloves, if available.
- Unless the cut is major, clean it and the surrounding skin under running water.
- Lay the person down in case they get dizzy or are in shock.
- If possible, raise the wound higher than the head/heart to lessen the blood flow.
- Leave any large object stuck in the wound there (as pulling it out could make the bleeding worse).
- Apply pressure to the wound with a clean cloth or pad and bandage it. (If there is a stuck object, build up the padding around it and apply pressure either side.) Bandage firmly, but not so tight as to restrict blood flow.
- Unless the wound is minor, get medical advice as quickly as possible.

More information about first aid can be found at the St. John Ambulance website: www.sja.org.uk