

WorkSafeBC Occupational First Aid

Worker handouts for at-home and
return-to-work minor wound care

Small wounds and cuts

You have an open wound.

With proper care it should start to feel better in about three to four days.

The healing process will be more effective by following this advice:

- Keep dressing clean and dry
- If skin closures have been applied, they are to remain in place for 7 to 10 days
- When bathing or showering, cover dressings to prevent moisture from entering
- You should notice some redness around the wound, which is part of the natural healing process
- You may also notice slight pain the day following the injury, this is also part of the natural healing process
- Report to first aid within 24 to 48 hours after the injury
- First aid will reassess and re-bandage

If at any time you notice that pain, redness, and swelling increase significantly, or if there is pus in the wound or red streaks extending from the wound, report to first aid, who may refer you to medical aid. If the condition becomes significantly worse while you are not at work and you decide to seek medical aid, notify the attendant as soon as possible.

Sprains

A sprain is stretching, a partial or complete tear of a ligament at a joint.

You have suffered a mild sprain involving a stretching of the ligaments.

With proper care it should start to feel better in about three to four days.

The healing process will be more effective by following this advice:

- Whenever possible, elevate the limb
- Continue to apply cold for 20 minutes on, 5 minutes off
- Remove the crepe bandage for sleeping
- You may notice some pain the following day when bearing weight, with the crepe removed you may notice some increased swelling when the limb is not elevated
- Report to first aid at the start of your next shift, the first aid attendant will reassess and re-bandage if necessary

You may need to discuss altering work activity with your supervisor.

If at any time you become unable to bear weight or the pain and swelling increase significantly, report to first aid, who may refer you to medical aid. If the condition becomes significantly worse while you are not at work and you decide to seek medical aid, notify the attendant as soon as possible.

Tendonitis

Tendonitis is the inflammation of the tendon.

You have tendonitis (also called RSI, repetitive strain injury) from excessive, unaccustomed activity.

With proper care it should start to feel better in about three to four days.

The healing process will be more effective by following this advice:

- Avoid motion that aggravates the tendons
- Rest the part; mild cases of tendonitis usually recover spontaneously within a few days of rest and a change of activity
- For tendonitis of the wrist, wear a wrist brace for sleeping
- Apply cold for 20 minutes on, 5 minutes off for one to two hours
- Alternating cold and heat may also assist in healing
- You may notice minor pain the following day
- Report to first aid at the start of your next shift and the first aid attendant will reassess

You may need to discuss altering work activity with your supervisor.

If at any time pain and swelling increase significantly, report to first aid, who may refer you to medical aid. If the condition becomes significantly worse while you are not at work and you decide to seek medical aid, notify the attendant as soon as possible.

Flash burns

Flash burns are burns to the surface of the cornea.

Direct or reflected ultraviolet light from an electric arc or welding torch may cause a flash burn. Corneal burns become more painful after some hours, depending on the severity and length of exposure.

Although flash burns are very uncomfortable, they are not serious and usually heal in 12 to 24 hours.

The healing process will be more effective by following this advice:

- Cold compresses at night for pain
- Avoid bright lights as this may aggravate the flash burns
- Wearing dark glasses may relieve some of the pain
- Mild pain medication (ASA or acetaminophen) may help to sleep at night
- You may notice minor pain the following day – this is normal
- Report to first aid at the start of your next shift
- First aid will reassess and document any symptoms you are experiencing

You may need to discuss altering work activity with your supervisor.

If at any time the pain increases significantly, report to first aid, who may refer you to medical aid. If the condition becomes significantly worse while you are not at work and you decide to seek medical aid, notify the attendant as soon as possible.

Minor burns

You have a minor burn.

The reddening of your skin indicates a first degree burn and if there are small blisters, that indicates a second degree burn.

The healing process will be more effective by following this advice:

- Keep the burned area covered
- Ensure the dressings stay dry and clean
- You may notice minor pain the following day – this is normal
- Report to first aid at the start of your next shift
- First aid will reassess and document any symptoms you are experiencing

You may need to discuss altering work activity with your supervisor.

If at any time the pain increases significantly, report to first aid, who may refer you to medical aid. If the condition becomes significantly worse while you are not at work and you decide to seek medical aid, notify the attendant as soon as possible.

Back strain

You have strained the muscles and/or tendons in your back.

With proper care it should start to feel better in a few days to a week.

The healing process will be more effective by following this advice:

- Avoid motion that aggravates the muscles and tendons.
- Continue to apply cold for 20 minutes on, 5 minutes off for the first 24 hours
- After 24 hours, the application of heat may also assist in healing
- You may notice minor pain the following day
- Report to first aid at the start of your next shift, the first aid attendant will reassess your back which will include a range of motion check and will document any symptoms you are experiencing
- You may need to discuss altering work activity with your supervisor.
- Although moving around may be uncomfortable, it is important to keep active without aggravating the injury. This will help relieve muscle spasms and help strengthen the back muscles.

If at any time the pain increases significantly, report to first aid, who may refer you to medical aid. If the condition becomes significantly worse while you are not at work and you decide to seek medical aid, notify the attendant as soon as possible.