

Looking after a skin tear: know the basics

1. In most cases, it is best to see a doctor or health professional for advice.
2. Always start by washing your hands thoroughly, and drying with a clean towel.
3. Stop any bleeding by gently pressing a clean dry towel against the wound. Talk to your doctor if the bleeding does not stop after 10 minutes.
4. After the bleeding has stopped, rinse the wound well with cold running water. Drinkable tap water is fine. Don't use soap.
5. Gently remove any dirt with a soft, clean, moist cloth. See your doctor if you are unable to gently remove all the dirt from the wound.
6. After cleaning, gently pat dry with a soft clean cloth.
7. If there is a loose flap of skin, carefully place the flap back over the wound without stretching the skin.
8. Cover the wound with a non-stick dressing pad (see Diagram 1 for instructions). Ask your doctor or pharmacist for advice on an appropriate dressing as some dressings can make the skin tear worse.
9. Keep the bandage on until the wound is completely healed – this is usually five to seven days.
10. Change the bandage if it becomes loose, wet, or dirty. Dressings suitable for skin tears are not waterproof and need to be kept dry.
11. Remove dressings gently and slowly. To avoid further damage to the skin, take care to remove in the opposite direction to the skin flap (see Diagram 2 for instructions). If the dressing sticks to the skin, try dabbing the edges with damp paper towel.

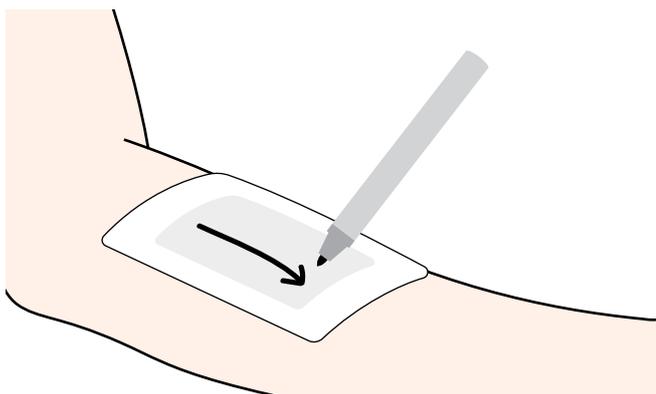


Diagram 1: Dressing your skin tear

Cover the wound with a non-stick dressing pad. Draw an arrow on the top of the dressing to indicate the direction for removing. The arrow should be pointing in the same direction as the edge of the skin flap.

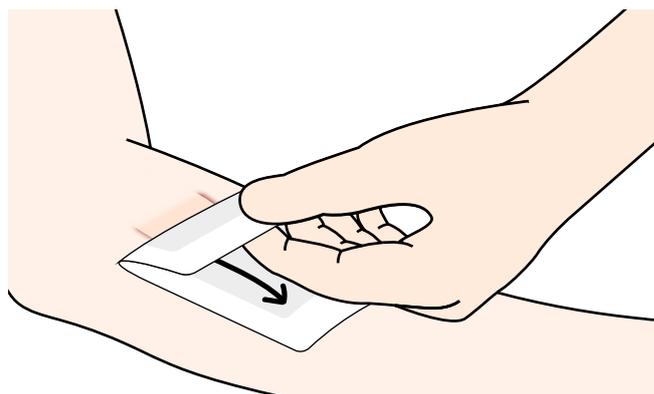


Diagram 2: Safe removal of the dressing

Remove the dressing slowly and close to the skin, using the arrow to guide you. **Never pull against the direction of the skin flap.**

If you have any concerns about cleaning and dressing the wound or how to safely remove your dressing, talk to your pharmacist or doctor.