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## **OPEN WOUND CARE**

### ***What is a wound?***

A wound is an injury causing damage to the skin and often the underlying tissues. It can be open (e.g. a cut) or closed (e.g. a bruise).

### ***What should I do if a wound is bleeding?***

Try to initially stop bleeding by applying pressure to the wound with an adsorbent dressing such as dry gauze, followed by a layer of bandage material or clean dry linen. This will protect the wound during transport to the veterinary hospital and prevent any further contamination of the injury.

If possible, try to raise the affected area above the level of the heart. This will help reduce the flow of blood.

Do not apply ointments or any other chemicals to the wound, as they can interfere with its eventual healing.

### ***Why leave a wound open?***

Most open wounds are contaminated with bacteria after several hours and often contain foreign material such as dirt, grit or hair. If possible, your veterinarian will try to clean this wound and repair it, either immediately or after several days, depending on its size and degree of contamination.

When the wound is old (i.e. 4-8 hours or longer) or grossly infected (e.g. a cat bite abscess), it will often be left to heal without closing using a combination of repeated flushing, bandaging and antibiotic therapy. In the cases mentioned above, this treatment is the way to promote a speedy recovery of your cat's injury.

### ***How should I manage an open wound at home?***

As instructed by your veterinarian, clean the wound 2-3 times daily with a mild antiseptic solution or warm water to remove any crusted discharge and keep wound edges clean.

Bandaging daily, as demonstrated by your veterinarian, may also be required if there is a lot of discharge from the wound and/or to prevent your cat from excessively licking the area.



***Is any other medication required?***

Sometimes your cat will be given a course of antibiotics if the wound is infected. No other topical treatments should be used, unless directed by your veterinarian, as some chemicals can damage tissues and delay wound healing.