

all-natural first aid

Warm weather + kids = cuts, sprains, and more. These easy at-home fixes will have your child back outside in no time. by [Marygrace Taylor](#)



CLEAN A CUT

“Though antiseptic sprays may kill bacteria, they typically contain chemicals that can be irritating to the skin,” says Bryan Stuchell, M.D., chief medical officer for MedExpress Urgent Care Centers.

Instead, **rinse the cut with water only, and use a soapy cloth to wash around the area.** If you notice any dirt or debris, remove it with tweezers that have been sterilized in boiling water for 15 minutes. **SEE A DOCTOR IF:** The wound turns red, swells, gets warmer, or the pain increases.

PATCH UP A SCRAPE

Until a scab forms (usually within 24 to 48 hours), **cover your kid's boo-boo with a snug, but not airtight, natural bandage**, like All Terrain EcoGuard Bandages for Kids (\$4 for 25, [allterrainco.com](#)).

“It'll keep dirt and debris from entering the wound and causing an infection—without trapping in too much moisture, which can lead to the growth of bacteria,” says Stuchell. **After a scab forms, remove the bandage:** Exposure to air will let the wound finish healing faster.

SEE A DOCTOR IF: The cut is more than ¼ inch deep, is gaping, has jagged edges, or you see fat or muscle protruding.

SOOTHE A SPRAIN

For the quickest recovery, **minimize swelling by applying a cold compress for**

the first two to three days (20 minutes at a time, three or four times a day should do the trick). After that, “heat can relax the muscle and speed healing for muscle sprains (not joint sprains),” says Stuchell. Try 20 minutes or less at a time, until pain subsides.

SEE A DOCTOR IF: Numbness develops, or if redness spreads from the injury.

EASE A SUNBURN

The old home remedy of applying vinegar to sunburns may ease pain, but it's not the best idea, Stuchell says. Vinegar can dry out the skin, which is counterproductive, since sunburned skin needs additional moisture. Another natural remedy that isn't worth the trouble: applying cool milk to the burn (the milk could end up causing an infection). The only real cure for sunburn is time, but you can **reduce your child's discomfort by applying a cool damp washcloth or a thin layer of aloe vera gel** to keep the burn cool.

SEE A DOCTOR IF: High fever or severe

pain develops, or if there's no sign of improvement after three days.

HANDLE A BEE STING

First, **remove the stinger** with a pair of tweezers or the edge of a credit card. Use the tweezers to grab underneath the venom sac (a round object at the stinger's end) and pull the stinger out. Just take care not to squeeze the sac, as that will release more venom and cause more pain. Or place the credit card edge underneath the venom sac flat on the skin, then scrape forward to push the stinger out and away. Afterward, **treat the affected area with ice**—Stuchell says it's the only natural method that's been proven to both reduce pain and lessen swelling. If you just want to ease the pain, other natural solutions may also work: try applying calamine lotion or a paste made of baking soda and water.

SEE A DOCTOR IF: The sting leads to dizziness, lightheadedness, trouble breathing, severe swelling, or hives. ●