



# MIDWEST HAND CENTER

## Research Medical Center

### Guidelines for Emergency Room Wound Care of Hand Injuries

1. - Basic assessment and triage of traumatic hand injuries includes:  
The evaluation of vascular status and perfusion, presence of open fractures, tendon and nerve injuries, possible compartment syndrome, degree of contamination and devitalized tissue, and tetanus status. Gross contamination and/or tetanus prone wounds should undergo an initial irrigation with sterile saline solution to decrease infectious complications.
2. - Non-critical injuries can usually be treated with some sterile saline irrigation and wound closure with splinting and referral to a hand surgeon. It is not necessary to find and tag lacerated tendons or other injured structures. The preferred dressing is one that applies a non-stick dressing to the skin as a first layer such as Xeroform or Adaptic. This allows for easier, less traumatic dressing removal in the office or operating room setting.
3. - Critical injuries that require immediate referral and transfer are also best dressed with an initial non-stick dressing to the skin that allows for a less traumatic removal later. Saline soaked gauze sponges can be used if their removal is anticipated within a few hours only.
4. - Human and/or animal bites are best left not sutured after irrigating due to their tendency for becoming infected. If vital structures such as tendon, nerve or vessel would be left exposed then a few sutures widely spaced are indicated.
5. - In cases of digit amputations, the amputated parts can be cleaned lightly then placed in saline-soaked gauze within a plastic bag which itself is placed in a bag of crushed ice. The amputated part is never placed directly on ice. Further instructions regarding possible re-plantation can be found in the Midwest Hand Center PDF on replantation located on this website.  
<http://researchmedicalcenter.com/healthcare-services/trauma-care/Midwest-Hand-Center-Replantation-Policy.pdf>

If there are any questions regarding wound care please do not hesitate to contact our physicians through the 1-888-5-2ADMIT phone number.