



Prevent • Promote • Protect

Office of Communication

1675 W. Garden of the Gods Rd., Suite 2044
Colorado Springs, CO 80907
(719) 578-3199 *phone*
(719) 575-8664 *fax*
www.elpasocountyhealth.org

Tetanus and First Aid Guidance

Keeping up to date on tetanus vaccination is an important step in preventing infection. During an emergency, tetanus is a concern for persons with both open and closed wounds, and a tetanus vaccination is recommended for all residents or first responders who have not had a documented dose within the past five years.

Tetanus is different from other vaccine-preventable diseases because it does not spread from person to person. The bacteria are usually found in soil, dust and manure and enter the body through breaks in the skin - usually cuts or puncture wounds caused by contaminated objects.

Prompt first aid management for wounds and prevention of infection is another important consideration. If an individual receives a puncture wound or a wound contaminated with feces, soil, or saliva, a health care professional should determine if a tetanus booster is necessary, based on individual records.

Wound Care

Seek medical attention as soon as possible if:

- There is a foreign object embedded in the wound.
- The wound is at special risk of infection (such as a dog bite or a puncture by a dirty object).
- A previous wound shows signs of becoming infected (e.g. increased pain, heat, swelling, redness, draining, or fever).

Care for Minor Wounds

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and clean water.
- Avoid touching the wound with your fingers while treating it.
- Remove obstructive jewelry and clothing from the injured area.
- Apply direct pressure to any bleeding wound to control bleeding.
- Clean the wound after bleeding has stopped:
 - Examine wounds for dirt and foreign objects.
 - Gently flood the wound with clean water, then gently clean around the wound with soap and water.
 - Pat the wound dry and apply an adhesive bandage or dry clean cloth.
- Provide pain relievers, if possible.

Other Considerations

- Wounds in contact with soil and sand can become infected.
- Puncture wounds can carry bits of clothing and dirt into wounds and result in infection.
- Crush injuries are more likely to become infected than wounds from cuts.

For more information visit www.elpasocountyhealth.org or call the El Paso County Public Health Immunization Clinic at (719) 578-3199.