

Puncture Wounds

Puncture wounds can be caused by splinters, nails, and just about any sharp object, including the sharp pectoral and dorsal fins of some fish species. Such wounds are hard to clean. To treat a puncture wound use sterilized tweezers if necessary to remove the sharp object. Encourage the wound to help flush out dirt or other particles. Clean the injury thoroughly with soap and water and rinse well with clear water. Allow the wound to air dry, and cover it with a clean, dry dressing.

Fishhooks also can cause a nasty puncture wound. Always be aware of the path of your fishing rod and line when you cast to prevent the hook from catching on anything—especially another angler! Never try to remove a hook that is lodged in the face or near an eye, artery, or other sensitive area.

If you or someone else gets hooked, cut the line to keep the hook from getting further embedded. If only the point of the hook enters the skin and the barb has not taken hold, you can safely remove the hook by backing it out. If the barb becomes embedded, it's best to let a physician remove it. If medical help is not available, try this method:

1. Tie a length of strong string to the bend of the hook.
2. Press down on the shank of the hook to free the barb.
3. Maintain pressure on the shank, and jerk firmly on the string in the direction the hook entered.

If the barb is visible above the skin, use this method:

1. Cut off the barbed end with wire cutters or pliers.
2. Back the shank of the hook out through the entry wound.

After removing the hook, wash the area with soap and water and cover it with a dry adhesive or gauze bandage.

For any puncture wound be sure to see a physician about the possible need for a tetanus booster shot and to help prevent infection.

Back out hook if barb has not taken hold.

