

VENICE PLASTIC SURGERY

A.E. HAAS, M.D.

Cosmetic, Reconstructive, Face, Breast, and Hand Surgery

Wounds - Using small bandages, the Band-Aid

How is it possible to mess up the application of a Band-Aid? There are many ways to make small bandages harmful. Most often the error is the improper use of tape to hold dressings in place. For example a patient may have an ankle wound on the outer side of the leg. A small gauze dressing is placed over the wound. The tape to hold the dressing is then wrapped all the way around the ankle and leg creating a tourniquet. Tape is usually either adhesive or paper and neither stretch.

The same problem may occur with the dressing material. If soft gauze rolls are applied circumferential then it must be the stretchy type. Some of these gauze rolls, the less expensive ones, do not stretch. Here again we have a tourniquet. We usually use paper tape and only wrap it half or three quarters the way around.

Those small Band-Aids as from Johnson & Johnson must be applied correctly. Often patients tell me they are allergic to tape or to the adhesive on elastic bandages. The problem is most often they apply the tape after first stretching it tight on the skin. This tension on the skin may cause it to be pulled skin off with time. We may call this a tape burn. It is not an allergy but rather the improper tension when applying the tape or the small bandage.

Finger bandaging is sometimes a challenge. The answer is to use a spiral dressing. This will allow for expansion or swelling. You may try a stretch type of larger dressing in the area. There is a stretch type of tube shaped gauze that is useful. Alone it is not a good dressing but will hold the usual type of bandaging gauze in place.

I avoid the use of additives as Neosporin ointment either in the bandage or applied before the dressing. Ointments tend to clog pores and make some wounds worse. There is a Neosporin Cream available and I recommend this if you insist on using an additive.

Remember, to apply a Band-Aide type of bandage, first remove the paper backing from the adhesive strip. Do not stretch the strip. Apply the bandage without stretching it then place it on the wound.

When applying a bandage do not make it tight unless the doctor gives you specific instructions to do so. Do not wrap tape all the way around. Use stretch bandages and gauze. If it does not feel right have the doctor inspect it. The wrong treatment makes many wounds even worse.

The above represents the opinion of A. E. Haas, M.D.

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Just call us directly. No referral needed unless required by your insurance company

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