

VENICE PLASTIC SURGERY

A.E. HAAS, M.D.

Cosmetic, Reconstructive, Face, Breast, and Hand Surgery

Salt water wounds

We are in Florida. This is a water sport area. Many wounds are a result of injuries that occur on the beach or in the Gulf of Mexico. People step on broken glass or shells cutting their feet. Alligator and shark bites are rare but sting ray bites are common. People are constantly falling off of boats, docks and rocky shore areas. Boating injuries result in major injuries.

I have heard people say you should shuffle your feet while wading at the beach. This is to scare off sting rays so you do not step on them. Personally this seems incorrect. If you shuffle your feet you may then cut your feet on a sharp shell fragment. Both injuries are a problem.

The treatment for a stingray injury is cover the wound with a large warm towel. The same may be true for a jellyfish encounter. The emergency room doctor may recommend a very weak application of warm water with a thimble of ammonia in it. This inactivates the poison in some cases. A barb or stinger may have been imbedded under the skin. This presents an additional problem. The worst thing though is infection. Bacteria related to tuberculosis called Mycobacterium and other ones known as Vibrio can cause slow but devastating infections. Do not hesitate to seek medical attention.

A cut from a beach palm tree is another type of bacteria problem. If you step on a thorn or cut yourself on the sharp edge of a palm stalk you will need specific antibiotics. These will be different from the ones for that sting ray bite. The doctor needs to know where and how the injury happened. One needs to check their tetanus immunization status as well. Preventative medicine is trying to keep something simple from becoming a big problem.

**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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