

Taking Care of Road Rash

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It appears that early season racing has resulted in an unusual amount of crashes this year, so I thought it would be appropriate to discuss Road Rash.

All right, so it sucks to be you! Unfortunately you crashed in a race resulting in some major road rash. You pick yourself up off the pavement and a quick assessment reveals no damage to your bike (thank God) but a hole in the side of your shorts with a bright red spot shining through. As my mama used to say, "This ain't the NFL and there ain't any time-outs." So you jump on your bike and start the lonely pursuit to the peloton.

Once you settle in on your pursuit, take your water bottle (a good reason to have water in it) and flush the abrasion with copious amounts of water. This helps remove a small amount of grit, which may save some scrubbing later on. Your brain has called out the troops and they have rallied to the injured area to start the healing process; you probably won't be in much discomfort until after the race.

After the race you may pay a visit to the EMS, and more than likely they will squirt the area with a saline solution and apply a gauze dressing. However, the real work of cleaning the abrasion is yet to come. If you go to a local hospital or Med center they will ask you the inevitable question, "When was your last tetanus shot?" and your answer is, "I'm not sure." Guess what, you're getting a shot. The hospital and Med Center staff will show no mercy in cleaning your abrasion so be prepared to bite the bullet. If you plan on cleaning the abrasion yourself, more than likely your spouse will display an inordinate amount of vigor and enthusiasm in cleaning the wound for you.

It is very important to clean the abrasion thoroughly or risk the chance of an infection, which will just complicate matters and slow the healing process. Take a non-scented soap, a clean wash cloth, plenty of clean water and start scrubbing. You have to get all of the dirt and grime out! If you're a sissy like me then take a bag of ice wrapped in a clean towel and apply it to the abrasion until the area is good and numb (no frost bite please), then scrub the daylights out of the abrasion until the feeling comes back, re-apply ice and repeat the process. When you're done, the area will be bright red, with all those tiny nerve endings exposed to the air, and guess what: it stings! A lot! Apply Neosporin—it helps with the sting and promotes healing. Also, don't dress the area; let the oxygen speed the healing process. Apply a dressing only when on the bike. Thoroughly clean and apply Neosporin after every ride.

Hope you have a speedy recovery!