The Governing Council of the Cat Fancy

GCCF Recommended Management After a Cat Bite

Background
Cat bites in the cat show situation are unfortunately common and can progress to serious infection.

It is imperative that all bites which break the skin are promptly treated and that antibiotic therapy is started for all cat bites. (NICE Feb 2018).

The majority of cat bites at cat shows are to the hand and wrist region. Cat bites involve deep puncture wounds which can cause severe infection in a short time. Bites to the hand are at increased risk of infection because of the multiple small compartments and number of joints.

A recent study in US showed that 30% of people presenting to hospital A+E with cat bites needed admission for intravenous antibiotic therapy and operative treatment. The majority of these cases needing admission presented 24 hours after the bite and were not taking antibiotics.

Initial management

1. If the bleeding is severe apply firm pressure with paper roll or clean towel to stop bleeding for up to 10 minutes while elevating the injured limb. Call 999 ambulance immediately if the bleeding is not controlled or there is any spurting of blood. Remove any foreign bodies (i.e. teeth).

2. Irrigate thoroughly for several minutes with warm water (running tap). This will reduce the bacterial contamination of the wound and encourage minor bleeding which may be beneficial.

3. Cover the wounds with a sterile dressing.

4. Do not continue to judge or steward.

5. Elevate the arm and do not use the hand or wrist to reduce swelling and chance of infection developing.

6. Medical help should be sought immediately for assessment of the wounds as further treatment with removal of dead tissue/irrigation/dressings maybe needed and there should be no delay as the risk of infection increases with time.

7. ORAL ANTIBIOTICS SHOULD BE TAKEN AFTER ALL CAT BITES and started as soon as possible to reduce the risks of infection (NICE Feb 2018)

8. Antibiotic therapy recommended by NICE: CO-AMOXICLAV 500MG/125MG ONE TABLET THREE TIMES DAILY FOR 7 DAYS If allergic to Penicillin: DOXYCYCLINE 100MG TWO IMMEDIATELY AND THEN ONE DAILY FOR 7 DAYS PLUS METRONIDAZOLE 400MG THREE TIMES DAILY FOR 7 DAYS

9. Tetanus status should be checked. Show judges and stewards should ensure their tetanus status is always up to date.

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