

# Lakeview Community Wellness Center Orthopaedic Connection

## Human Bites

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### *Transforming patient information into patient understanding.*

Most of us have never experienced a human bite (thank goodness!). While this is not common, it is an important subject to know something about. If this happens to someone you know this information will help you be of help to them. Ready? Here we go.

### **Two Kinds**

1. The first is a "bite" over the knuckles when a tooth strikes a clenched fist as in a punch. Ouch, for both people, the hitter and the one punched.  
**Key point**: It's more than a skin injury. The wound usually goes through a tendon and into the joint. This makes it quite serious. Please remember this point!
2. The second kind is a real bite of the fingers or thumb. These are very dangerous too for the same reasons.

### **Yuck!!**

Better to be bitten by an animal. You have all heard this. Why? Because human bites have much higher concentrations of both aerobic and anaerobic bacteria. In addition human bites can transmit HIV and hepatitis.

### **Symptoms**

As you can see I am concentrating on the hand bites because that is what I am called to see. Bites can occur anywhere and I've seen a few, but that's another story!

I know from experience that patients are often reluctant to tell me how it happened and they may have waited 2 or 3 days. But, I have to know what happened to be able to treat it properly.

- Irregular laceration
- Swelling, redness going up the hand and wrist
- Can't move the finger or thumb properly
- May lack sensation if a nerve is cut
- Drainage is a bad sign
- Red streaks in the forearm

### **Tests**

You need these. *Anything less is not adequate treatment.*

- Plain x-rays. Fractures are common with these injuries
- Culture swab of any drainage present.

- A WBC blood test might be ordered.

### **Treatment**

- Never suture the wound.
- Local anesthetic used to examine the wound and culture it.
- Clean the bite and wash (scrub) it thoroughly including the entire hand with at least a liter of saline.
- Tetanus shot
- Antibiotic (my choice)
- Sterile dressings
- Follow up in 24 hours
- Possibly go to surgery depending on wound condition. I often take these injuries to surgery. Sadly, many bite wounds are not treated in this way and by the time the patient comes to me the wound is a mess.

### **Lakeview Area News and Office Website**

I sincerely hope all of our readers are taking advantage of an endless amount of Orthopaedic and musculoskeletal information. It is very easy. Log onto the office teaching website [www.orthopodsurgeon.com](http://www.orthopodsurgeon.com). That gives you access to -

- All the website articles
- Your Orthopaedic Connection articles
- Every Lakeview Community Wellness Center Orthopaedic Connection article appearing in Lakeview Area News from most recent to first. Full text!

Check out this tremendous collection of information.

### **Orthopaedic Clinic**

As I hope most of you know I am at the Lakeview Community Wellness Center every other Friday afternoon seeing patients. All of the Orthopaedic problems I treat can be evaluated there. Clinic dates coming up are March 2 and March 16, 2012.

Call 989-463-6092 for an appointment at the Lakeview Orthopaedic Clinic or at the main office in Alma.

Our goal is simple - To help people return to more pain free, functional lives.

I specialize in you.

Good health. Good life. All the best to you.

Be well.

Dr. Haverbush