

Q. My puppy came home from his daily run with a 1" laceration on his lower hind leg. I didn't notice it because he hardly bled, so when I went to wipe his paws off at home, I saw the blood and injury. I rushed him to the vet to find out this was a deep laceration that nicked the connective tissue of his joint. Dr. said 1mm deeper would have meant a permanent joint wound that would greatly alter his abilities. 1mm shallower would have meant just a skin wound. I was told if we couldn't limit his activity, he would not heal well and would have arthritis issues later. This meant 14 days of the "cone", no running, no jumping, no stairs, and leashed to potty outside. It was very hard on this dog and us, although it could have been much worse. Today the stitches came out and all healed very well.

I don't now exactly what happened, although that day he ventured into a thick ravine in the Forest Preserve. I called him out and we went about our business. I returned there to investigate and found the adjacent private property had some junk and a few pieces of sheet metal half buried and sticking out of the ground. I suspect this to be the culprit.

The injury has made me fearful of taking him out on runs. I occasionally see junk in the Forest Preserve, but very little. I think the risk is low, but I don't think we can go through this sort of thing again. Therefore, I think I'm going to limit Forest Preserve runs while the leaf and snow cover is thick. I do have another spot that is a great place to run him in the winter that is totally safe.

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A. I'm really sorry to hear your puppy was injured, but you can't let it shake you up or prevent you from taking him on "adventures." The chance of injury is always there and is just part of having a hunting dog. You take reasonable precautions and hope for the best. Everyone I know with hunting dogs has had vet bills from injuries. It cannot be 100% avoided. If you do not have a good emergency medical kit for your dog in your truck, I strongly suggest you get one. I have two. One stays in the truck and the other one stays in the house. Be sure to get one that includes a First Aid booklet, a skin stapler and forceps for removing quills. Add a muzzle to your kit, because you'll need it if your dog gets seriously injured, caught up in barbed wire, etc. Good options are at Amazon.com (<https://amzn.to/2W57rbs>; <https://amzn.to/2W888kc>) and [GunDogSupply.com](http://GunDogSupply.com).

Which reminds me, if you haven't yet had your puppy around barbed wire fences, you need to do so ASAP. He needs to learn about them and how to navigate through and around them before he gets so bold he accidentally runs into one going full speed while chasing a flying bird. He needs to get nipped a little bit so he is careful and cautious around them. Barbed wire is part of a hunting dog's life in the field. I can't tell you how many people have come here and their dog has gotten hurt on a line fence. All interior fencing on our property has been removed. The only fence we have is the line fence around the perimeter of our property, but they still manage to get hurt by it because their owners never introduced them to fences.

Another little hint... Vets will tell you to keep your dog in for 14 days because they assume you won't follow instructions and keep them in for the 10 days that are really required. Also, cones aren't always necessary. Everyong hates those things.

For body injuries you can put a small t-shirt on your dog so they can't lick their wounds. For lower leg injuries, I've rigged up a plastic cup that I taped to the leg with vet wrap. So be inventive and you can make recovery a little easier on you both.