



PROTOCOL CHANGE/ADDITION

1-08

Topic: Removal of Leeches

Protocol Change: Use of heat or chemicals to remove leeches is no longer recommended

Implementation: September 1, 2008

Rationale:

Leeches carry bacteria that can be regurgitated into the host if heat or chemicals are applied. The optimum way to remove the leech is as follows:

First use a fingernail to push the **head** end of the leech off of the skin. It is important to note that the **head end is the smaller, skinnier part of the leech**- not the larger end. After the head is released, use a fingernail to push the larger end off.

Once the leech is removed there will be some bleeding due to the anticoagulant produced by the leech. Cleanse the wound and apply a dressing if required.

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Ross Purser MD, CCFP(EM)

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Brad Reid- Advanced Care Paramedic