

T1

SOFT TISSUE INJURIES and WOUNDS

Soft tissue injuries involve the skin, subcutaneous tissues, and underlying musculature. An injury to these tissues is commonly referred to as a wound. These injuries can be extremely painful. The patient may require psychological support in addition to care for the physical injuries.

GENERAL

- personal protective equipment should be utilized as appropriate
- body substance isolation techniques and equipment should be utilized as appropriate
 - maintenance of an open airway and ensuring adequate respirations has priority over all other treatments, including control of the cervical spine
- primary survey
 - expose wound sites by removing or cutting clothing around the wound
 - control any major bleeding (see External and Internal Bleeding Guideline)
 - record vital signs
- consider load and go criteria
- secondary survey - consider underlying injuries
- if conscious, place patient in a position of comfort whenever possible and injuries permit
- obtain a pertinent history
 - injuries identified by patient
 - time of injury
 - mechanism of injury
 - past medical history
 - medications
 - allergies
 - last meal
- provide supplemental oxygen based on patient's presenting condition and vital signs
- treat for shock, if indicated
- treat all wounds
 - distal circulatory and neurological status must be assessed prior to applying dressing and bandages, and reassessed after applying dressings and bandages
 - monitor distal circulatory and neurological status en route
 - be prepared to adjust the bandages and dressings if status is compromised by the dressings or bandages
- do not allow the patient to exert him/herself - e.g. walking, standing unassisted to transfer to the stretcher, etc.

- initiate transport
 - on scene times should be kept to a minimum
 - treat other life-threatening conditions en route
 - transport the patient to the nearest appropriate health care facility
 - notify the receiving health care facility of the patient's status as soon as possible
- transport in position of comfort with knees bent, if injuries permit
 - provide psychological support while en route
 - monitor and treat the patient en route
 - additional surveys and treatments should be conducted en route
- document all actions including the decision to initiate load and go
- report all findings to the receiving facility staff, and document on the patient care report

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Closed Wounds

- suspect underlying fractures
 - splint if fracture is suspected

Open Wounds

- expose all wound sites
- clear wounds of loose foreign material
- apply dressings and bandages to all wounds
- control bleeding (see External and Internal Bleeding Guideline)

Incised Wounds or Lacerations

- edges of the wound may need to be drawn together prior to dressing the wound(s)

Impaled Objects

- stabilize the object
- if the object impedes transport then careful shortening (cut) of the object may be required (object impaled in chest)
 - immobilize object securely during shortening effort
- do not remove object unless it interferes with CPR or causes a complete airway obstruction (e.g. object impaled in cheek)
- see chest injury guideline

Eviscerations

- cover the evisceration with sterile, saline soaked dressings
- support the evisceration with additional dressings
- maintain warmth

Avulsions

- clean the wound surface
- fold the skin flap back to its normal state
- control bleeding with direct pressure

Gun Shot Wounds

- scene assessment is very important
 - ensure the scene is safe prior to entering
 - police may be required
 - ensure safety for all EMS personnel and bystanders
 - continuously monitor the scene and be prepared to leave immediately
- if possible, identify the type of weapon and the caliber
- load and go should be initiated immediately
- assess the patient carefully for entrance and exit wounds
 - expose all wound sites
 - treat injuries as per the appropriate Guideline
 - if clothing must be removed or cut from the patient, EMS personnel should avoid damaging or cutting through entrance and exit holes in the clothing
 - clothing should be transported with the patient and be delivered to the receiving facility staff
 - clear wounds of loose foreign material
 - apply dressings and bandages to all wounds
 - control bleeding (see External and Internal Bleeding Guideline)
 - consider internal bleeding, fractures, and injuries to underlying organs and structures
- any additional surveys and treatment should be conducted en route
- be prepared to manage cardiorespiratory distress or arrest

NOTES :