

Preface



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The management of wounds is an essential skill for emergency medicine and acute care physicians. More than 12 million acute care visits a year can be attributed to wounds in the United States alone. Emergency health care providers are faced with an expanding variety of simple and complicated wound types, and it is essential that these clinicians be well versed in the current management of such wounds. Other challenges include the increased incidence of emerging infections and antimicrobial resistance, which adds to the evaluation and treatment challenges. Additionally, multiple new technologies are available for wound management with occasionally conflicting or limited supporting data making their use difficult for the practicing physician.

In addition to the diagnostic and treatment challenges, litigation in wound care is one of the most common areas of emergency medicine malpractice suits. Wound care accounts for 5% to 20% of all emergency department malpractice claims and 3% to 11% of all dollars paid out. The most common reason for litigation in emergency department management of wounds involves failure to diagnose foreign bodies, wound infections, and failure to detect underlying injury to nerves, tendons, or violation of a joint capsule. Proper understanding of wound care is essential for emergency health care providers not only to reduce litigation but also to reduce morbidity and mortality.

This edition of the *Emergency Medical Clinics of North America* will provide information on pathophysiology, epidemiology, management, and

treatment of wounds seen in the acute care setting. A broad spectrum of wound care management is included with management recommendations for acute (routine) wounds along with those for chronic (difficult) wounds. We highlight available guidelines, provide the best evidence available, and provide expert recommendations where data are limited.

The editors are pleased to present a broad range of talented authors to provide an excellent, in-depth review for wound management in the acute health care setting. Our hope is that this text provides readers with an excellent best practice review and valued future reference that will be integrated into clinical practice.

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