

# Educational Handout:

## Pediatric Soft Tissue Trauma

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The term 'soft tissue' can refer to the skin, fat, muscle, tendons, ligaments, nerves and blood vessels. Bones and internal organs are not considered 'soft tissue'.

Severe, complex soft tissue wounds often require inpatient hospitalization and surgical care. Hospital stays can vary from a few days to several weeks. Surgical debridement (excising damaged or infected soft tissue) sometimes requires repeat surgeries.

The care of patients with severe soft tissue wounds is multi-disciplinary and may involve pediatricians, surgeons, infectious disease specialists, child life specialists, occupational/physical therapists, wound care nurses, and nutritionists.

Care and healing of complex soft tissue wounds continues even after discharge from the hospital. Outpatient visiting home wound care nursing and outpatient occupational or physical therapists are often coordinated prior to discharge home. Ask your care team if these resources are needed for child's continued recovery at home.

Frequent outpatient office visits are often required to assess the ongoing healing of wounds. During these visits wound care providers assess need for additional surgery, signs of infection, appropriateness of selected wound care products, and overall recovery of the patient.

At home, it is important to continue to observe the wound. Be alert to the following changes: redness around wound, fluid or pus discharge from the wound, a bad odor from the wound, or increasing pain around the affected area. If you notice any of these changes please contact your provider. Additionally, decreased appetite, fevers/chills or unexplained irritability may indicate a wound-healing problem that is subtle. If you notice any of these symptoms please contact your provider.