

## Dermatology Coding Alert

### Reader Questions: Extra Cleaning Earns Intermediate Repair

**Question:** Our dermatologist removed extensive debris from a wound that then required a single-layer closure. Should I report this service with a code for wound repair or a code for foreign-body removal?

Ohio Subscriber

**Answer:** Because the doctor performed extensive removal of particulate debris, you should report an intermediate code for the repair, such as 12041 (Layer closure of wounds of neck, hands, feet and/or external genitalia; 2.5 cm or less).

**Tip:** CPT states that "single-layer closure of heavily contaminated wounds that have required extensive cleaning or removal of particulate matter also constitutes intermediate repair." Payers following CPT rules recognize the extra work of the extensive cleaning and removal through more intensive and higher-valued intermediate repair codes.