

OASIS Alert

Education : THIS SURGICAL WOUND ANSWER MAY SURPRISE YOU

Counting wounds is not as easy as it seems.

Scenario: The patient has a surgical incision and the staples have been removed. The incision is not totally epithelialized and there are two openings along the incision line where the edges are not approximated.

Question: OASIS item M0484 asks for the current number of observable surgical wounds and includes the instruction: "If a wound is partially closed but has more than one opening, consider each opening as a separate wound." How many surgical wounds would you say this patient has?

Answer: Only one, according to the **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** in its January OASIS questions and answers. In this scenario, you have a surgical wound healing at different rates, but no part of the wound is completely epithelialized, CMS clarifies. "Therefore, you still have only one surgical wound."

"If there had been a section of the wound that was considered healed (4 weeks post complete epithelialization), and there were two openings separated by the healed area, you would have two surgical wounds," CMS adds.

Note: The latest OASIS Q&As are available through the **OASIS Certificate & Competency Board**. Go to www.oasiscertificate.org and select "Resources."