

The intermediate and complex repair coding guidelines provide a clear distinction between the two repair classifications.

The guidelines clarify that:

- intermediate repair includes limited undermining and provides a definition of limited undermining; and
- complex repair includes the requirements listed for intermediate repair below and at least one of the following from the complex repair list:

Intermediate repair	Complex repair
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Includes simple repair✓ Requires layered closure of one or more of the deeper layers of subcutaneous tissue and superficial (non-muscle) fascia *✓ Includes limited undermining (defined as a distance less than the maximum width of the defect, measured perpendicular to the closure line, along at least one entire edge of the defect) **<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Example: maximum width of defect perpendicular to line of closure e.g., 2 cm<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Less than 2 cm undermining done on one side of the line of closure e.g., 1.5 cm✓ May constitute single-layer closure of heavily contaminated wounds that have required extensive cleaning or removal of particulate matter <p>* <i>Limited undermining is not required to meet coding criteria;</i></p> <p>** <i>Layered closure of one or more of the deeper layers is required to meet coding criteria.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Must meet requirements for intermediate repair (e.g., layered closure)✓ Must also include at least one of the following:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exposure of bone, cartilage, tendon, or named neurovascular structure;• Debridement of wound edges (e.g., traumatic lacerations, avulsions);• Extensive undermining (defined as distance equal to or greater than the maximum width of the defect, measured perpendicular to the closure line along at least one entire edge of the defect);<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Example: maximum width of defect perpendicular to line of closure: 2 cm<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Equal to or more than 2 cm undermining done on one side of the line of closure e.g., 2.5 cm• Involvement of free margins of:<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Helical rim◦ Vermilion border◦ Nostril rim• Placement of retention sutures

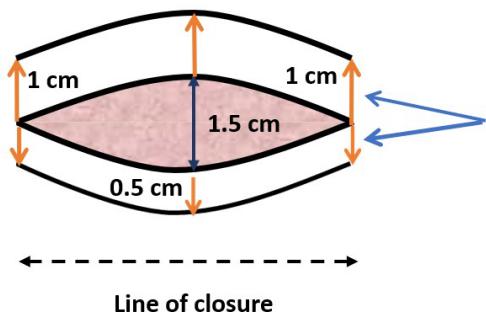
Intermediate and Complex Repair

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Illustrative examples of Intermediate and Complex Repairs

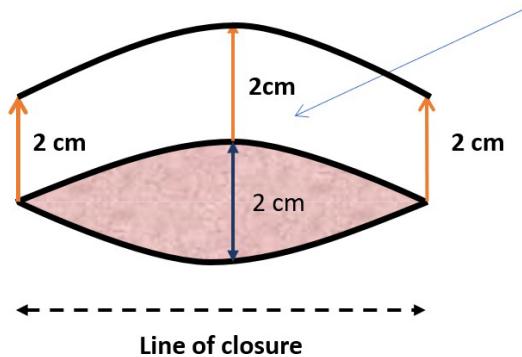
Intermediate Repair: Undermining



Intermediate repair undermining is defined as:

Undermined distance less than the maximum width of the defect, measured perpendicular to the closure line, along at least one entire edge of the defect.

Complex Repair: Undermining



Extensive undermining is defined as:

Distance equal to or greater than the maximum width of the defect, measured perpendicular to the closure line, along at least one entire edge of the defect.

Illustrations courtesy of Alexander Miller, MD – AAD CPT Advisor

For more information, contact the Academy's Practice Management Center:
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