

## Gunshot Wound: Jury Faults Care Given In E.R.

The male patient in his early twenties was brought in with a gunshot wound in his lower left leg. The bullet had fragmented after fracturing the tibia bone.

Surgery to repair the tibia led to compartment syndrome, further complications, additional surgeries and below-the-knee amputation.

The patient's lawyers sued the hospital and the orthopedist who took over his care shortly after he arrived in the E.R. but dismissed the hospital before the case went to trial.

During the first thirty-six hours before the first surgery the orthopedist and the nurses carrying out the orthopedist's orders only wiped the area of the wound with a sterile gauze pad soaked in Betadine but made no effort to irrigate or debride the wound. That was the lawyers' principal assignment of negligence at trial.

The jury in the District Court, Jefferson County, Texas awarded \$1,535,000. **Sylvester v. Christus Health, 2009 WL 674320 (Dist. Ct. Jefferson Co., Texas, February 12, 2009).**