

## Glossary of Terms

### A

<b>Abrasion</b>	An area of body surface denuded of skin or mucous membrane by some unusual or abnormal mechanical process. An injury. <sup>1</sup>
	A tear through the full thickness of the skin or other tissue. <sup>1</sup>
	An injury to the skin in which there is removal of the superficial epithelial layer of the skin (the epidermis) due to friction against a rough surface with resultant scraping away of the superficial portions of the epidermis, or destruction of the superficial layers by compression. There are three types: scrape or brush injury (grazes or sliding), impact abrasions (pressure) and patterned abrasions. <sup>4</sup>
<b>Anterior</b>	Situated in front of or in the forward part of an organ, toward the head of the body; a term used in reference to the ventral or belly surface of the body. <sup>1</sup>
<b>Asphyxia</b>	Pathological changes caused by lack of oxygen in respired air. May be partial (hypoxia) or total (anoxia). Loosely grouped into three categories: suffocation, strangulation, chemical asphyxia. <sup>1,4</sup>

<b>Avulsion</b>	A form of laceration where the force impacting the body does so at an oblique or tangential angle to the skin, ripping skin and soft tissue off the underlying fascia or bone. <sup>4</sup>
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### B

<b>Bruise</b>	Contusion – see below
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### C

<b>Caudad</b>	Directed toward the tail; opposite cephalad. <sup>1</sup>
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<b>Cephalad</b>	Toward the head; opposite caudad. <sup>1</sup>
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<b>Contusion</b>	An area of hemorrhage into soft tissue due to rupture of blood vessels caused by blunt trauma. Contusions may be present in skin and in internal organs. Contusions may be patterned to reflect the configuration of the object used or the contusion may only correspond to the edges of the object used. Deep bruising may not be visible externally. <sup>4</sup> A contusion can be “presumed” if the area is tender but the hemorrhage is non-visible. Estimation of the age of contusions is imprecise and discouraged.
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### D

<b>Distal</b>	Remote; farther from any point of reference. <sup>5</sup> Term used to describe an area away from the center or point of reference. Opposite of proximal.
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<b>Diaphoresis</b>	Profuse sweating.
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	<b>Diplopia</b>	Double vision.
	<b>Dorsal</b>	1)Term used to describe an area situated on the back. Opposite of ventral. 2) Denoting a position more to the back. <sup>1</sup>
	<b>Dysphagia</b>	Difficult or painful swallowing. May be present following a strangulation.
<b>E</b>	<b>Ecchymosis</b>	A hemorrhagic area on the skin due to extravasation of blood into the skin or a mucous membrane. <sup>1</sup>
	<b>Edema</b>	The presence of abnormally large amounts of fluid in the intercellular tissue spaces of the body that may be localized due to venous or lymphatic obstruction or to increased vascular permeability (trauma) or it may be systemic due to heart failure or renal disease. <sup>1</sup>
	<b>Erythema</b>	A redness of the skin or mucous membranes produced by congestion (dilation) of the capillaries. <sup>1</sup>
<b>F</b>	<b>Fissure</b>	General term for a cleft or groove. Cause may be non-traumatic.
	<b>Forensic</b>	Pertaining to or applied in legal proceeding. 5 Evidence based assessments, with collection and preservation of evidence, photo-documentation and reported findings with patients involved in crimes may be termed medical, living, or clinical forensics.
<b>H</b>	<b>Healing Wound</b>	The restoration of integrity to the injured tissues by replacement of dead tissue with viable tissue. Variations in wound healing are the result of differences in location, severity of the wound, and the extent of injury to the tissues. Other factors include age, nutritional status, and general state of health of the patient. 5 Estimation of the age of wounds is imprecise and discouraged.
	<b>Hematoma</b>	A large focal collection of blood in an area of contusion. <sup>4</sup>
	<b>Hyperemia</b>	An excess of blood in a part. 5 A localized engorgement or congestion of blood. The dilation of the vessels may cause redness and/or swelling. Cause may be non-traumatic.
<b>I</b>	<b>Incised Wound</b>	A cut in the skin produced by sharp, edged weapons or instruments. The sharp edge of the instrument is pressed into and drawn along the surface of the skin, producing a wound whose length is greater than its depth. <sup>4</sup>
		Other wounds due to sharp edged instruments are stab wounds and chop wounds.



	<b>Induration</b>	The quality of being hard; the process of hardening . <sup>1</sup>
	<b>Inferior</b>	Situated below, or directly downward; a term used in reference to the lower surface of an organ or other structure. <sup>1</sup>
	<b>Inflammation</b>	A localized protective response of tissues, elicited by injury or destruction of tissues, which is usually characterized in the acute form by the classical signs of pain, heat, redness, swelling and loss of function <sup>2</sup>
<b>L</b>	<b>Laceration</b>	A tear through the full thickness of the skin or other tissue resulting from crushing or tearing forces (blunt). There are usually abraded edges, tissue bridges within the wound and devitalized tissue evident in the wound. <sup>3,4</sup> This is the preferred and considered a more rigorous definition to be used by forensic examiners. A transection (cut) through the skin, mucous membranes or deeper structures of the body. <sup>1</sup> This is a more vernacular or common definition used by many clinicians.
	<b>Lateral</b>	Term used in reference to the side.
	<b>Lesion</b>	Any pathological or traumatic discontinuity of tissue; a broad term including wounds, sore, ulcers, tumors, cataracts, and any other tissue damage. 5
	<b>Ligature wound</b>	Wound inflicted by tightening a flexible linear object (such as a rope, necklace or duck tape) around a body part. In assaults, ligature wounds may be seen around the neck, wrists, and ankles.
<b>P</b>	<b>Petechiae</b>	Small, pinhead sized hemorrhages caused by leaking capillaries. May be singular or multiple. Frequently caused by increased pressure within the blood vessel, as with straining during vomiting or with strangulation. May also be caused by a bleeding disorder, infection or localized trauma.
	<b>Posterior</b>	Situated in back of, or in the back part of; a term used in reference to the back or dorsal surface of the body. <sup>1</sup>
	<b>Proximal</b>	nearest to a point of reference, as to a center or median line. 5 Term used to describe an area towards the center or point of reference. Opposite of distal.
	<b>Purpura</b>	A small hemorrhage (up to about 1 cm in diameter) in the skin, mucous membrane, or serosal surface, which may be caused by various factors, including blood disorders, vascular abnormalities, and trauma. <sup>1</sup>



<b>S</b>	<b>Scar</b>	Fibrous tissue, which replaces normal tissue after the healing of a wound. <sup>3</sup>
		<i>May be difficult to prove on clinical grounds alone, such as during visual inspection or palpation.</i>
	<b>Scratch</b>	Linear abrasion, linear wound made by scraping.
	<b>Subconjunctival hemorrhage</b>	Ruptured blood vessel beneath the conjunctiva, usually caused by a sudden increase in cranial pressure. May be seen following strangulation, forceful cough or valsalva's maneuver.
	<b>Superior</b>	Situated above, or directly upward; a term used in reference to the upper surface of an organ or other structure. <sup>5</sup>
<b>T</b>	<b>Transection</b>	A cutting across. Division by cutting or tearing transversely.
<b>V</b>	<b>Ventral</b>	1)Term used to describe an area situated on the front. Opposite of dorsal. 2) Denoting a position more toward the belly surface than some other object of reference; same as anterior in human anatomy. <sup>1</sup>
<b>W</b>	<b>Wound</b>	A bodily injury caused by physical means, with disruption of the normal continuity of structures .5

- References:**
1. Dorland's Illustrated Medical Dictionary. 28th Edition. W.B. Saunders, Co., Philadelphia, 1994.
  2. McCann J., Use of Colposcope in Childhood Sexual Abuse Examinations. *Pediatr Clin North Am*, 1990; 37:863-880.
  3. Adams JA., Terminology Subcommittee of the APSAC Medial Standards Task Force. January, 1995.
  4. Dimaio DJ, DiMaio VJ; Forensic Pathology. CRC Press, 1993.
  5. Encyclopedia and Dictionary of Medicine, Nursing, and allied Health 6<sup>th</sup> Edition. Miller-Keane, 1997

**Sources:** "Glossary of Terms and the Interpretation of Findings for Child Sexual Abuse Evidentiary Examinations." American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children.

