

## What are the signs of infection for people who have bed sores?

People with advanced bed sores (stage 3 or stage 4) are particularly susceptible to developing infection both in the wound itself and potentially systemically. In order to minimize risk of infection, care should be taken to keep the wound clean and dry. Dressings should be changed on a regular basis as ordered by a treating physician.

The following may indicate infection within the wound itself:

- Increased pain in the wound
- Edema (swelling)
- Reddening of the wound (erythema)
- Increased fluid accumulation
- Heat in the wound area
- Unusual smell

Occasionally, an infection that originates in the wound itself, can spread throughout the entire body. These situations can pose a significant health risk to the individual. Signs of systematic infection include:

- Elevated white blood cell count
- Elevated body temperature
- Cellulitis (skin infection)
- Osteomyelitis (bone infection)

Because infection is a frequent complication for people with bed sores, physicians and other medical professionals should make the monitoring of existing wounds a priority. Wounds should be documented and photographed to assist in the evaluation of wounds as they heal.

If you have an existing bed sore and have any of the above conditions, contact your medical professional immediately.