

Jonathan Rosenfeld's Nursing Homes Abuse Blog

Bed Sores: Not Just A Pain In The Butt-- More Like An Uncontrollable Killer

Posted by [Jonathan Rosenfeld](#) on November 16, 2010

Pressure sores (also referred to as bed sores, pressure ulcers, or decubitus ulcers) are an all too [common](#) and painful problem for nursing home residents.

Most pressure sores are preventable and are caused by [faulty care](#) where the nursing home or hospital does not provide adequate care to prevent and treat bed sores. Patients [vulnerable](#) to developing pressure sores are the elderly, people who are bedridden, and people with diabetes.

Pressure sores in nursing homes can be prevented by taking simple preventative measures including:

- Turning patients
- Using pressure reducing mattresses and pads ([pressure relieving devices](#))
- Keeping residents clean and dry
- Providing adequate nutrition and hydration
- Performing skin checks

Pressure sores can progress into open wounds with damaged surrounding tissue. As with any open wound, infection can occur, especially when a pressure ulcer has progressed to [Stage 4](#) (skin and tissue is severely damaged, wound is large).

[Complications](#) frequently associated with *Stage 4 Pressure Sores* include:

Jonathan Rosenfeld represents victims of nursing home abuse and neglect throughout the country. For more information please visit Nursing Homes Abuse Blog (www.nursinghomesabuseblog.com), Bed Sore FAQ (www.bedsorefaq.com) or call Jonathan directly at (888) 424-5757.

- [Bone/join infections](#) (osteomyelitis, the infection spreads into your bones and can cause damage to tissue and cartilage)
- [Cellulitis](#) (infection of the skin's connective tissue, spreads quickly and can cause sepsis and meningitis, two life-threatening complications)
- [Sepsis](#) (bacteria enters your bloodstream, life-threatening condition which can cause organ failure and shock)
- [Cancer](#) (of the skin's squamous cells)
- Death

The U.S. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality analyzed the 503,300 pressure sore related hospitalizations in 2006. This analysis showed that:

- 45,500 hospital admissions had pressure ulcers as the primary diagnosis
- 1 in 25 hospitalizations related to pressure sores resulted in death during the admission
- 457,000 hospital admissions had pressure ulcers as the secondary diagnosis
- 1 in 8 of these admissions ended in death
- Pressure ulcer related hospitalizations also cost more than the average hospital stay (\$16,755-20,430 as opposed to about \$10,000) and requires a longer hospital stay (13-14 days as opposed to only 5 days)

The [increased](#) mortality rate of patients suffering from pressure sores can oftentimes be attributed to coexisting medical conditions. Another [study](#) found that when nursing home residents suffer from a pressure ulcer that fails to heal, the resident has a two to threefold increase in risk of dying in the six weeks following hospital admission.

The increase in mortality for patients with pressure sores may be complicated by the fact that they may be suffering for other medical complications, research suggests that the number of deaths related to pressure sores is under-reported. Still, about 60,000 people die each year from complications directly attributable to pressure sores.

Therefore, it is important that long-term care facilities take precautions to help prevent residents from developing a bed sore in the first place. Maintaining the best possible

physical health of a patient includes preventing pressure sores that could lead to serious and even life threatening complications.

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