

Jonathan Rosenfeld's Nursing Homes Abuse Blog

Decubitus Ulcers Remain A Significant Problem For Nursing Home Patients

*Posted by **Jonathan Rosenfeld** on December 28, 2010*

Despite increased publicity and laws requiring nursing homes to implement preventative measures, decubitus ulcers--- also referred to as: bed sores, pressure sores or pressure ulcers remain a significant threat to the health of patients in nursing homes.

From the time that the decubitus ulcers develop, some nursing homes begin to shift the responsibility for the development of the wounds onto the patient and family. However, a closer look at the care-- or lack thereof-- provided to the patient during their admission to the facility generally reveals that the facilities failure to properly care for the patient was the real cause of the decubitus ulcer.

For most families, the discovery of a decubitus ulcer on a family member is a disturbing finding that leaves them with many questions about why the wound initially developed, what types of treatment options are available and what type of legal recourse is available.

At [Bed Sore FAQ](#), we receive questions and inquiries from families across the country who are facing difficult decisions following the development of a decubitus ulcer on a loved one during an admission to a nursing home, assisted living facility or hospital.

We believe, that the more informed families become about this preventable medical condition, the better they will be able to make the important decisions that will inevitably be encountered from a medical and legal perspective.

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.

Below are the 10 most popular questions and articles from [Bed Sore FAQ](#) over the past year by number of hits per page:

1) [Photographs and diagrams related to stages and development of bed sores](#)

Warning some of these images may be disturbing.

2) [Bed Sore Treatment Specialists](#)

We have assembled a national directory of wound care specialists which can be searched by state.

3) [What is a Kennedy terminal ulcer?](#)

A Kennedy Terminal Ulcer or Kennedy ulcer is a specific type of bed sore (also referred to as pressure sore, pressure ulcer or decubitus ulcer) that is characterized by rapid onset and rapid tissue breakdown. The ‘Kennedy Ulcer’ was named after Karen Lou Kennedy–Evans– the nurse who discovered the medical condition. [Continued....](#)

4) [How does the use of the Braden Scale help in the prevention of bed sores?](#)

The Braden Scale for Predicting Pressure Sore Risk is a universally accepted tool to help staff in nursing homes and hospitals identify individuals who may be at risk for developing bed sores (also called decubitus ulcers, pressure sores or pressures ulcers).

The Braden Scale for Predicting Pressure Sore Risk evaluates each resident in the following areas: sensory perception, degree to which the skin is exposed to moisture, the individuals level of activity, the individuals ability to change positions, nutrition and the exposure to situations that can result in friction and shear to the skin. [Continued....](#)

5) [If a lawsuit or claim is filed against a facility where a person developed bed sores, what type of damages is the person entitled to?](#)

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‘Damages’ refer to losses sustained due to physical or psychological injury for which you can be compensated. In cases involving the development of a bed sore (also referred to as decubitus ulcer, pressure ulcer or pressure sore), damages are assessed in terms of money compensation.

In order to recover damages, you first must establish that the nursing home or hospital was responsible for the development of the bed sore. Like all injury cases, bed sore cases require the injured person– or their estate– to prove the facilities negligent care resulted in the development of the bed sore.

Continued....

6) How do medical facilities assess healing bed sores?

In order to maximize the effectiveness of bed sore treatment, medical facilities need to monitor bed sores as they heal. Most medical facilities assess how well a bed sore (also called: decubitus ulcer, pressure ulcer or pressure sore) is healing based on the size of the wound and the physical characteristics.

The size of the bed sore can be measured with a disposable ruler or with tracing paper. Increasingly, medical facilities are using technology such as ultrasound and computer guided imagery to assist in assessing bed sores during the healing process. Continued....

7) What is DuoDerm and why is it used to treat bed sores?

DuoDerm is the brand name for a commonly used hydrocolloid dressing manufactured by ConvaTec that is used to treat bed sores (or similarly referred to as: pressure sores, pressure ulcers or decubitus ulcers).

Hydrocolloid dressings have gel-like properties to absorb excretions from the wound and protect the wound debris and potentially infection causing bacteria. Hydrocolloid dressings help the wound to autolytically debride itself (the body uses its own enzymes to break down dead tissue as opposed to surgically removing it). Continued....

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8) What areas of the body are prone to develop bed sores?

Bed sores can develop in any area of the body where pressure is continually applied without relief. Most frequently, we see bed sores in areas of the body that bear a majority of a person's body weight when they sit or lay in one position for long periods of time such as:

- Buttocks
- Sacrum
- Heels
- Back

Continued....

9) What is a wound vac and how does it work?

A wound vac (also referred to negative pressure wound therapy) is a machine used to treat advanced bed sores. A wound vac uses a pump to suction fluids from bed sores or other wounds that are difficult to heal on their own.

An airtight, vacuum chamber is created by draping a polyurethane material over the entire surface area of the wound while a foam-type material is packed into the wound itself. A pump is then attached to this area to draw moisture from the wound itself. The pump acts as a vacuum to draw the excess fluids from the wound and collect them into a chamber. Continued....

10) Sometimes Medical Complications, Such As Bedsores, Are Not Disclosed Until The Patient Is Seen At A Hospital

Some of my angriest clients contact me after a loved one was transferred from a nursing home to another nursing home or hospital only to learn of serious medical problems their loved one likely acquired during their original admission.

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Of course, breaking disappointing news is difficult for anyone to do. Yet, in the case of nursing homes- this is something they simply are required to do under the law. Similarly, nursing homes must notify the patients doctor if their condition deteriorates. **Continued....**

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