

# Bed Sore FAQs

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS FROM A NURSING HOME LAWYER

## Can malnutrition cause bed sores?

Yes. As unbelievable as it sounds, some patients are literally starving in nursing homes and hospitals across the country. When patients are not given adequate nutrition, organs begin to fail and critical body functions begin to deteriorate.

As the largest organ of the body, the skin is one of the first places where the consequences of malnutrition may be visible in the form of a bed sores (similarly described as pressure sores, pressure ulcers, or decubitus ulcers). There are various medical explanations why malnourished individuals are more susceptible to develop bed sores, but most experts uniformly agree that there are two primary reasons:

1) Malnourished people have less energy and consequently are unable to move on their own—resulting in a more time spent in one position.

2) A long-term consequence of malnourishment is loss of fat, muscle and tissue— that provide necessary padding particularly in bed-bound patients, the less padding the more pressure that is put directly on the body— thereby resulting in increased rate of bed sores.

Another component of malnourishment and bed sores involves the essential nutrition for the healing process. Patients with bed sores require an extraordinary amount of energy and nutrients, such as proteins and vitamins B and C, in order to heal advanced bed sores. Without adequate nutrition, bed sores will not heal and frequently may worsen.

The following are common symptoms of malnutrition:

- Diarrhea
- Disorientation
- Goiter (enlarged thyroid gland)
- Loss of reflexes and lack of coordination
- Muscle twitches
- Scaling and cracking of the lips and mouth
- Drastic weight loss

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