

# Bed Sore FAQs

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS FROM A NURSING HOME LAWYER

## **What does a patients albumin level have to do with bed sores?**

Albumin is a serum protein produced in the liver that is essential for proper blood circulation and metabolism of compounds in the body. A low albumin level (less than 3.5 g/dl) is indicative of several potential problems including: cirrhosis, malnutrition, or kidney disease.

Unlike other chemistry levels, a low albumin level is indicative of prolonged protein deprivation / malnutrition. Low albumin levels are indicative that the body has begun to breakdown muscle to compensate for an inadequate intake of protein. In individuals with bed sores, protein is essential to help the body heal the wounds.

Although not a predictor itself, a low albumin level has been associated with increased mortality and development of pressure ulcers. Sadly, little can be done to rapidly increase albumin levels in sick people. Consequently, attention must be paid to proper nutrition. The USDA recommends adults consume 50 – 65 gms. of protein per day. In weakened individuals, physicians may recommend even higher protein intake.

Interestingly, increased albumin levels is indicative of dehydration.