A pressure sore is an area of skin that breaks down due to unrelieved pressure.

**PRESSURE SORE BASICS**

*They may occur despite good care.*

*Typically occur over bony prominences (hip, heel).*

*Contributing factors include malnutrition and immobility.*

*Categorized into 4 stages ranging from superficial to deep (see table on following page). If a scab is present, a medical professional must remove the scab before the ulcer can be staged.*

*Treatment consists of relieving the pressure, cleaning the wounds and keeping the area clean and dry (see diagram on page 72).*

Although pressure sores may occur despite good care, warning signs that may indicate abuse include:

- Unusual location (e.g. head, inner part of leg, wrist)
- Malodorous wound
- Multiple locations and on more than one plane of the body
- No obvious attempt at care/treatment, especially for stage III or IV wounds (e.g. a lot of dead tissue or debris)

*If the person’s pressure sores seem suspicious, document and photograph:*

- Pressure sore location(s)
- Number of pressure sores
- Appearance
- Size
- Presence of odor
- Whether or not there was an attempt at treatment
- What the treatment was (if any)
- Whether or not the development of pressure sores was known and documented
- What was in the care notes (if any)
## Pressure Sores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage and Skin Diagram</th>
<th>Appearance of Skin</th>
<th>Approx. Time to Develop</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage 1: At Epidermis</strong></td>
<td>Red area with intact skin. Redness persists even when pressure is relieved</td>
<td>Minutes to Hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Diagram of Stage 1" /></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage 2: To Dermis</strong></td>
<td>Appears open like an abrasion or shallow crater, or may be a blister.</td>
<td>Hours to Days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Diagram of Stage 2" /></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage 3: To Fat Tissue</strong></td>
<td>Full thickness skin loss, deeper than a superficial wound, but not as deep as stage 4</td>
<td>Hours to Days to Weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Diagram of Stage 3" /></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage 4: To Muscle, Tendon, Bone</strong></td>
<td>May see bones, muscles, or tendons</td>
<td>Days to Weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image4" alt="Diagram of Stage 4" /></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Sample—For Geriatric Pocket Doc**

**Go to** [www.centeronelderabuse.org](http://www.centeronelderabuse.org)