

3) ASSESSING PRESSURE SORES

(a.k.a. Pressure Ulcers or Bedsores or Decubitus Ulcers)

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.)

SAMPLE—FOR GERIATRIC POCKET DOC

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

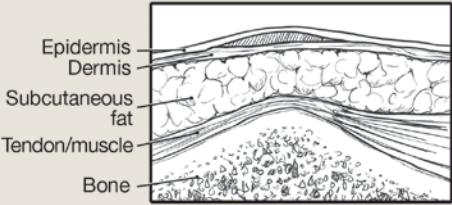
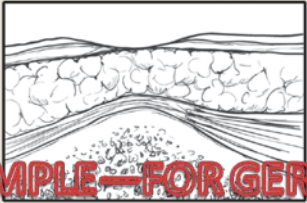
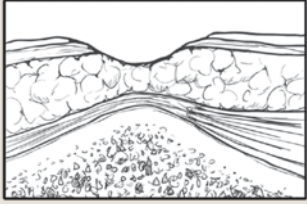
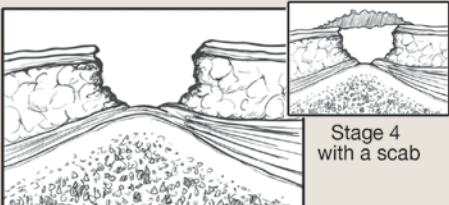
- Unusual location (e.g. head, inner part of leg, wrist)
- Malodorous wound
- Multiple locations and on more than one plane of the body
- No obvious attempt at care/treatment, especially for stage III or IV wounds (e.g. a lot of dead tissue or debris)

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

Stage and Skin Diagram	Appearance of Skin	Approx. Time to Develop
Stage 1: At Epidermis  <p>Epidermis Dermis Subcutaneous fat Tendon/muscle Bone</p>	<i>Red area with intact skin. Redness persists even when pressure is relieved</i>	<i>Minutes to Hours</i>
Stage 2: To Dermis 	<i>Appears open like an abrasion or shallow crater, or may be a blister.</i>	<i>Hours to Days</i>
Stage 3: To fat tissue 	<i>Full thickness skin loss, deeper than a superficial wound, but not as deep as stage 4</i>	<i>Hours to Days to Weeks</i>
Stage 4: To muscle, tendon, bone  <p>Stage 4 with a scab</p>	<i>May see bones, muscles, or tendons</i>	<i>Days to Weeks</i>

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IV. ISSUES RELATED TO ELDER ABUSE & NEGLECT