

Bedsore: A Sign of Nursing Home Neglect

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Data shows that rates of elderly neglect are high in institutions. This problem is expected to increase as many countries, including the United States, experience rapidly aging populations.

In many cases, loved ones are entirely unaware that nursing home neglect is going on, especially if the victim does not report it — either because they're frightened or unable to based on their current state. That is why it's critical to understand some signs of neglect, one of which is bedsores.

Whether you suspect neglect or your loved one has said things that have made you question the quality of care they receive, here is what you need to know about nursing home neglect, specifically concerning this telltale sign.

What Are Bedsores and Why Does My Loved One Have Them?

A bed sore is an ulcer that develops on your skin, caused by lying in bed or sitting in a wheelchair for prolonged periods. These sores are often called pressure injuries, and if not identified and treated immediately, they can lead to a fatal infection.

The development of nursing home bedsores can be complex, resulting from staff failing to:

- **Provide adequate food and water, leading to malnourishment.**

Numerous studies have reported a link between bedsores and declining nutrition, especially since vitamins and minerals are needed for wounds to heal.

- **Properly move or care for an elderly individual, creating friction.**

Elderly individuals have fragile skin that is prone to injury. If blood vessels are damaged, this will prevent blood, oxygen, and critical nutrients from reaching the skin. Bed sheets should be well maintained to avoid skin irritation.

- **Regularly reposition an individual who cannot move freely.**

This can cause pressure to build. Some of the most prone areas are the ankles, heels, shoulder blades, elbows, tailbone, hips, and spine.

Although bedsores do not automatically point to one of these potential causes, any sores on your loved one are a cause for concern and warrant further investigation.

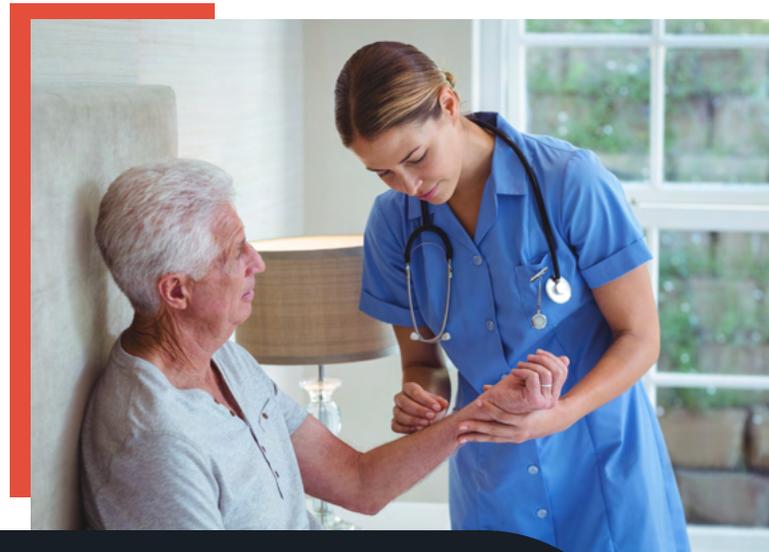
How to Identify a Bed sore

You may think, my loved one is prone to bruising, how can I tell if they have bedsores?

A bed sore is more than a scrape or a bruise; it is a discolored area that can be fairly severe.

Here are some warning signs to look for:

- Reddish or discolored skin, especially in areas that are under pressure when sitting or lying down
- If you put pressure on a discolored area of skin where bedsores are present, it will not lighten
- Blistering
- Open wounds
- Skin that is abnormally firm or soft
- Irritated skin (your loved one may express pain)



I Think My Loved One In A Nursing Home Has Bedsores, What Now?

No one wants to believe that their loved one is being mistreated. However, nursing home bedsores are not something to take lightly and can result in death. A federal report found that sepsis, an extreme response to an infection, was the most common reason for transfers of nursing home residents to hospitals. These cases ended in death “much more often” than hospitalizations related to other conditions.

The first step is to speak to your loved one; have they expressed any concerns that made you suspicious before you noticed the bedsores? It’s essential to communicate with your loved one. If they cannot effectively communicate following a stroke, the onset of dementia, etc., you need to be the voice for them.

Among those who cannot effectively communicate, it’s critical to observe any behavioral or emotional changes. Do they seem detached, sad, or exhausted? If so, it may be a sign of abuse or neglect.

If they are not receiving the medical attention they need, you must step in and have their bedsores looked at by a physician outside of the nursing home.

You Don't Have to Do This Alone

If you have noticed bedsores on someone in a nursing home and are worried about their current and future well-being, it's important to address your concerns. Nursing abuse and neglect are ongoing issues, and those responsible need to be held accountable.

At Solomon & Relihan, our Phoenix law firm has been representing personal injury victims since 1974, limiting our practice to nursing home and assisted living abuse and neglect cases.

Solomon & Relihan offers decades of experience and in-depth knowledge surrounding elderly abuse and neglect if you're looking for a nursing home bedsore lawyer in Arizona.

