

# VENICE PLASTIC SURGERY

A.E. HAAS, M.D.

*Cosmetic, Reconstructive, Face, Breast, and Hand Surgery*

## **Bed sores**

We used to call these decubitus ulcers or bed sores but that terminology is incorrect. Decubitus is from the latin word meaning to lie down but these sores or wounds may occur from being in any position. For example wounds occur on the buttock from being in the sitting position too long and occur on the elbow from resting the arm too long on a hard table.

More properly these wounds are called pressure sores as this is the mechanism that causes the problem in the first place. The body can take a lot of pressure in a small area but only for a short time period. For example, when I am standing straight up about 100 pounds of pressure is on each of my heels ( I weigh 200 pounds ). When we stand still we actually are constantly shifting our weight back and forth on our feet. This intermittent relief of pressure is all that is needed to allow for some circulation to the heels.

When we sleep we are in motion as well. Videos of people sleeping at night show that they shift their position intermittently. Then the weight of the body is spread over a larger surface when lying down so less shifting of the weight is needed.

The problem is with older, debilitated people who do not have the strength or energy to move themselves. Just lying in bed without somebody turning them may result in a pressure wound. Diabetic people lose the feeling in their feet. They sometimes sit for hours without moving or shifting foot position and a heal pressure sore develops.

Pressure sores are classified by their depth of the wound. Stage I sores are only skin deep but stage IV goes down to the bone. Most pressure sores are actually the deeper ones. Often when a patient is sent to my clinic the pressure sores at first look superficial to the untrained eye but is much bigger and deeper. The deeper tissues are more apt to go bad first. This type of injury that is usually worse inside than out is called the Inverted Triangle Principal.

Another time I will discuss the treatment but for now it is of benefit to everyone just to know what a pressure sore is and how to maybe help prevent them. The obvious answer is intermittent pressure relief. Keep changing peoples position as tolerated. There are also useful aids as beds that are specifically designed to minimize and distribute pressure while sleeping. Chair cushions are available for the same purpose.

At the hint of a pressure wound see your doctor.

**The above represents the opinion of A. E. Haas, M.D.  
Venice Plastic Surgery, Venice Wound Center, Lakeside Medical Center**

**Just call us directly. No referral needed unless required by your insurance company**

836 Sunset Lake Blvd # 103, Venice, FL 34292  
**(941) 492-4775**