

Risk Coding Tips and Tools

Pressure and Non-Pressure Ulcer

Documentation should specify if the ulcer is a pressure (decubitus) or a non-pressure ulcer.

Documentation Specificity

Document the:

- Type (Pressure or Non-Pressure)
- Site of the ulcer
- Laterality
- Severity (stage)
- Any associate underlying or comorbid conditions such as diabetes mellitus or vascular insufficiency

Staging Criteria

- Stage 1: Skin is intact but red or discolored
- Stage 2: Skin is broken and there is partial thickness loss of the epidermis and dermis
- Stage 3: Skin is broken and there is full thickness loss of the epidermis, dermis, and subcutaneous tissue
- Stage 4: Skin is broken and there is full thickness loss of the epidermis, dermis, subcutaneous tissue, and underlying structures such as muscle, bone, or tendon
- Unstageable: Skin is covered by slough or eschar and the depth of tissue loss is unknown



Wording Matters

- Do not document ulcers as “Open Wounds” or “Lesions”
- The term “healing” is considered to be **active**
- The term “healed” is considered to be **resolved**

You can find this resource and others like it in the OHN Risk Coding Corner at www.OrlandoHealth.com/Network/Resources.

You can also contact us at RiskCoding@OrlandoHealth.com for additional questions or support needs.

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Physician Documentation Examples

Example 1:

HPI: An 85-year-old male, currently residing in a SNF with a pressure ulcer **(type)** of the head.

Physical Exam: Dry thick brown eschar present, not stageable **(severity)**.

Assessment and Plan: Occipital pressure ulcer **(site)**, continue frequent position changes. Refer to wound care.

Example 2:

HPI: 62-year-old female here for follow up. Patient has vascular insufficiency **(underlying condition)** causing an ulcer.

Physical Exam: Pedal pulses decreased bilaterally. Left shin ulcer **(laterality-site)**, fat layer exposed **(severity)**.

Assessment and Plan: Vascular **(type)** ulcer of left shin with fat layer exposed. Healing well, continue with dressings and compression socks. Follow up next week.

Optum. (2021). *Documenting and coding tips: vascular disease*. RIPCPC.com
<https://www.ripccp.com/media/pods/september-2021/documentingandcodingtips-vascular-disease-approved-01-13-21-rev03-12-21-rqns0562.pdf>

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. (2023). *ICD-10-CM official guidelines for coding and reporting FY 2023*. CMS.gov.
<https://www.cms.gov/files/document/fy-2023-icd-10-cm-coding-guidelines-updated-01/11/2023.pdf>

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