

MDS Alert

Reader Questions: Differentiate Between Scabs and Eschars

Question: How do I know the difference between a scab and an eschar when I'm considering a resident's pressure injury?

Florida Subscriber

Answer: There are physical and chemical differences between scabs and eschar, the RAI Manual says.



"Eschar is a collection of dead tissue within the wound that is flush with the surface of the wound. A scab is made up of dried blood cells and serum, sits on the top of the skin, and forms over exposed wounds such as wounds with granulating surfaces (like pressure ulcers, lacerations, evulsions, etc.). A scab is evidence of wound healing," the RAI Manual says on page M-6.

"Eschar characteristics and the level of damage it causes to tissues is what makes it easy to distinguish from a scab. It is extremely important to have staff who are trained in wound assessment and who are able to distinguish scabs from eschar," the manual says.