

Pressure Injury Prevention – information for people at risk

Pressure injury

A pressure injury, also referred to as a pressure ulcer or bed sore, is an injury to the skin caused by unrelieved pressure. It may occur when you are unable to move due to illness, injury or surgery. A pressure injury can develop at home or in a hospital.

They may develop from poorly-fitted shoes, under plasters, splints or braces, and around medical equipment such as tubes, masks or drains.

Pressure injuries can happen quickly, from lying or sitting in the same position for too long. They can be painful, take a long time to heal, and may lead to other complications.



People at increased risk

You have an increased risk of developing a pressure injury if you are:

- Older or very young
- Immobile or unable to reposition yourself
- Underweight, eating poorly or have experience recent weight loss
- Overweight
- Incontinent (bladder and/or bowel)
- Experiencing reduced sensation/feeling.

Warning signs of pressure injury

Check your skin and look for the warning signs:

- Redness/skin discoloration
- Tenderness, pain, or itching in affected areas
- Blistering
- Broken skin.

Reducing your risk of pressure injury

There are a number of simple things you can do to help reduce your risk of developing a pressure injury.

Move frequently to relieve pressure

Reposition yourself or ask your carers to assist you to change your position. You can also ask them to regularly remind you to change position.

Eat a healthy diet and drink fluids regularly unless you are on fluid restriction

You may benefit from nutritional supplements if you are underweight, have recently lost weight, or have been eating poorly. Speak to a health care professional for advice.

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Keep your skin clean and dry

Regularly change incontinence pads. Use a soap-free cleanser and moisturiser, if appropriate.

Look after your feet

Check for signs of pressure injury on your feet. If you have diabetes or reduced sensation, check your feet regularly. Wear comfortable, well-fitted shoes.

Use appropriate equipment

Ensure any equipment you are using is in good working order and regularly maintained. Specialised pressure-relieving equipment, such as cushions and mattresses, may be required if you are identified as being at risk of developing a pressure injury, or currently have a pressure injury.

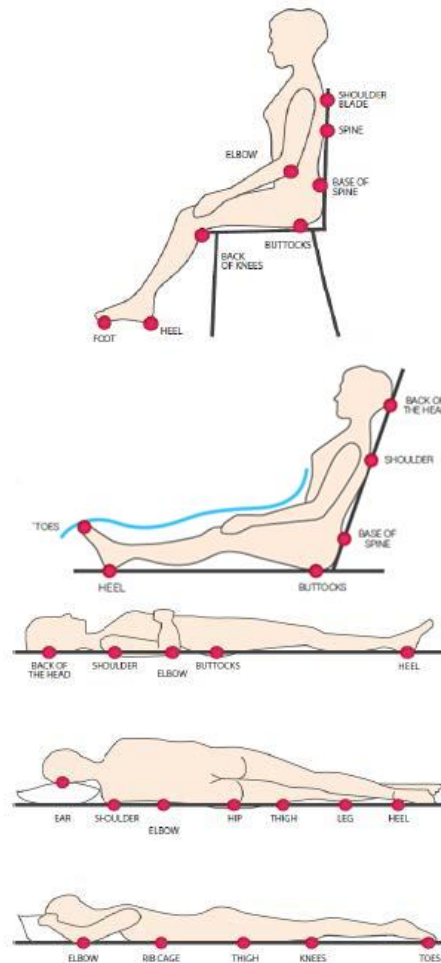
Check your skin

Where possible, check your skin at least daily for signs of a pressure injury. If you experience any warning signs speak to a healthcare professional for advice.

Early sign of pressure injury
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The diagrams below show the areas of body at risk of pressure injury when lying and sitting.



Acknowledgements

European Pressure Ulcer Advisory Panel, National Pressure Injury Advisory Panel and Pan Pacific Injury Alliance. Prevention and Treatment of Pressure Ulcers/Injuries. Clinical Practice Guideline. The International Guideline. Emily Haesler (ed). EPUAP/NPIAP/PPPIA: 2019