

What can you do to prevent pressure injuries?

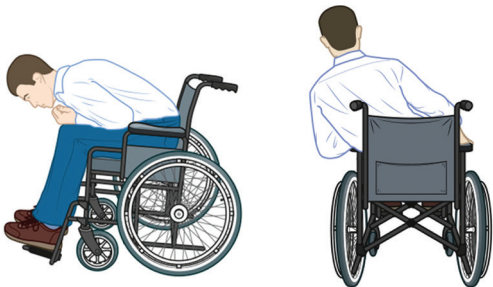
If you are in a bed:

- Change your position every two to three hours, moving between your back and sides.
- Use pillows between your knees and ankles to stop them touching each other, particularly when you are lying on your side.
- Avoid creased or rumpled bedlinen.
- If sitting up in bed, use a pillow at your feet to stop you sliding down the bed as this can cause a pressure injury to your bottom and heels.
- Ask for assistance if required.



If you are in a chair or wheelchair:

- Relieve pressure by leaning forward, or leaning side to side for a few minutes every half hour. This will help to shift your weight and change your pressure points.
- Use a pressure relieving cushion.



Other helpful tips

- Keep your skin clean and dry.
- Ask your nurse to help you manage any continence or toileting issues.
- Eat a healthy diet and drink plenty of fluids.
- Talk to your nurse about pressure relieving cushions and mattresses that are available to help prevent pressure injuries.

Your Nurse, Physiotherapist, Occupational Therapist or Doctor can help you plan your care to prevent a pressure injury.

Pressure injuries can sometimes occur even if you are doing everything you can to avoid them. However, if you look after yourself and receive the right treatment, pressure injuries can mostly be avoided and healed.

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Preventing pressure injuries

Looking after your skin

CLIN-0423

What is a pressure injury?

A pressure injury is an area of damaged skin and flesh caused by staying in one position for too long (e.g. long periods of time sitting or lying). Pressure injuries are also sometimes known as bed sores, pressure sores, pressure areas or pressure ulcers.

They can develop in a matter of hours and usually begin with the skin changing colour. Pain or discomfort may also occur.

If the pressure is not relieved regularly by changing position, then a wound can form. This may start as a red area but can quickly progress to a blister or ulcer if not treated.

Examples of pressure injuries



STAGE 1 - HEEL



STAGE 2 - BUTTOCK



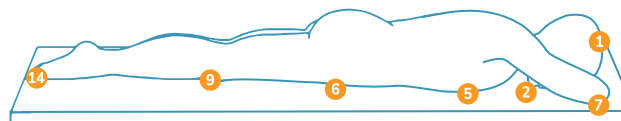
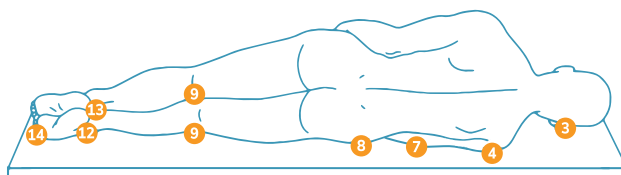
STAGE 3 - ANKLE



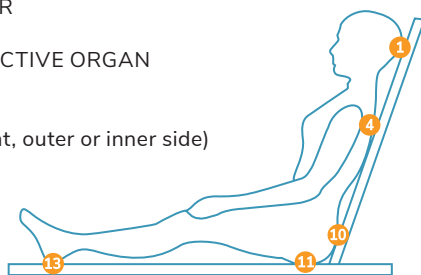
STAGE 4 - BUTTOCK

Which parts of your body are most vulnerable?

Pressure injuries develop on parts of the body that take your weight and where the bone is close to the surface.



- 1 HEAD
- 2 CHIN
- 3 EAR
- 4 SHOULDER
- 5 CHEST
- 6 REPRODUCTIVE ORGAN
- 7 ELBOW
- 8 HIP
- 9 KNEE (front, outer or inner side)
- 10 SACRUM
- 11 BUTTOCK
- 12 ANKLE
- 13 HEEL
- 14 TOES



! If any one of these places start to change colour or hurt, tell your nurse.

You are at risk of getting a pressure injury if:

- You spend long periods of time in bed
- You are in a wheelchair or you sit for long periods of time in a chair
- You have difficulty moving around
- You have a serious illness
- You are elderly or frail
- You have damp skin from:
 - Sweating
 - Incontinence (e.g. loss of bladder or bowel control)
 - Toileting issues (e.g. difficulty getting to the toilet in time, getting on or off the toilet)
- You have poor blood circulation
- You are very thin or obese
- You have loss of feeling in your limbs, feet, hands, buttocks, tailbone or any other part of your body
- You only eat and drink small amounts.

Despite the risks pressure injuries can mostly be avoided