Patient Information

Pressure Ulcer Prevention Guide
For You and Your Carers

What is a Pressure Ulcer?

A pressure ulcer is:
Damage to the skin that results from unrelieved pressure or poor manual handling. They can range from a discoloured area of skin to large open wounds usually over bony areas of the body. They are also known as bed sores or pressure sores.

Who is at Risk?

People who need support to move, are reluctant to move, who can’t feel their skin or have poor blood supply are at high risk of pressure ulceration. People who are incontinent are at risk of moisture related skin damage and this also increases their risk of pressure ulceration.

These are the most common sites that pressure ulcers can develop, in a range of different positions.

What Can I Do?

Think about SSKIN:

S - Support surfaces (e.g. mattresses, cushions, heel protectors) can be used to help with care delivery. Examples of:

S - Skin inspection will help you to see early signs of skin damage and report them to the community nurse. These include red patches on pale skin or bluish patches on darker skin. Swelling, blisters, pain or open wounds are also possible signs of pressure ulcers.

K - Keep moving! You should change your position at every opportunity. If possible, every 30mins to hourly stand and have a short walk.
I - **Incontinence/oedema care**, using the incontinence products provided for you. This includes washing with soap free products (e.g. aqueous cream) and applying barrier creams sparingly.

![Image of pressure ulcer]

N - **Nutritional care** at every opportunity. Make sure you have access to snacks and drinks. Eat a healthy, balanced diet using supplements where prescribed.

![Image of Eatwell Guide]

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**Top Tips For You & Your Carer:**

- Do encourage and support regular position changes.
- Do ensure that skin is clean, dry, moisturized and protected.
- Do encourage food and fluids.
- Do inspect pressure areas at least daily.
- Do use the equipment and care strategies suggested by the community healthcare team and seek their advice early.

- Do check that footwear fits properly, not too tight, not too loose. Ensure there are no stones or loose debris in the footwear before you put it on.

**What to do if you notice a problem:**

Follow your normal procedures for raising concerns about a change in condition.

Refer to community nurses or GP if you notice any signs of pressure ulcers forming.

If you experience more pain or discomfort in a common pressure ulcer site, or where you have a pressure ulcer already, contact the community nurses or GP.

**This is what you are trying to prevent!**

Images from European Pressure Ulcer Advisory Panel
PUCLAS e-learning

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