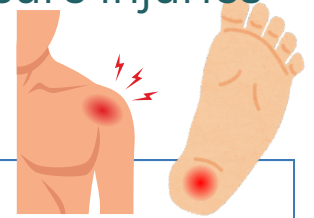


Understanding and Preventing Pressure Ulcers

A guide for people with or at risk of experiencing pressure injuries



What is a pressure injury?



A pressure injury, or also known as pressure ulcer and bed sore, is a localized damage to the skin and/or underlying tissue due to pressure or a combination of pressure and shearing. Pressure injuries usually occur over a bony area and may also be caused by contact with a medical device.¹ Every person is at risk of developing pressure injuries with immobility.

What can increase the risk of getting a pressure injury?²



Physical immobility



Frail skin



Vascular disease



Conditions influencing skin structure



Malnutrition



Old age

How to watch out for early signs of pressure injury?

Check for any **changes in skin** - redness in lighter skin tones or purple-blue colour in darker skin tones, texture/consistency, temperature or numbness. These areas may or may not be painful.



People who lie in bed for extended periods should **check the bony areas** where they rest their weight.

Check the **buttocks** of wheelchair bound person and skin areas that are in **long-term contact** with a medical device such as wheelchair.

What can I do if I have a pressure injury?

Reposition

- If in bed for a long time, reposition your body every two or four hours.
- Shift your weight every 15 minutes.
- Ask care partner to assist if needed.

Work with dietitian

- Work with dietitian to determine what is best to eat and drink to help pressure injuries heal.

Check in with healthcare team

- Work with the healthcare team to keep the pressure injury clean and treat any infection.

Ask about possible treatments

- Other treatment options include thermography, subepidermal moisture detection, multilayer foam silicone and others. Ask a member of the health care team about these treatment options.

Quick tips

- Change your positions often.
- Check your skin daily.
- Use a comfortable support surface like special mattress, pillow or cushion.
- Ask for support when going to the bathroom.
- Keep your skin clean and dry.
- Eat well and stay hydrated.
- Notify your provider if you feel discomfort.

References:

1. Haesler E, editor. Prevention and treatment of pressure ulcers/injuries: clinical practice guideline: the international guideline. 3. edition. Prag: Epuap, European Pressure Ulcer Advisory Panel; 2019. 404 p.
2. Chung ML, Widdel M, Kirchhoff J, et al. Risk Factors for Pressure Injuries in Adult Patients: A Narrative Synthesis. Int J Environ Res Public Health. 2022 Jan 11;19(2):761.