

General Preventive Measures That Will Help

Use items that can help reduce pressure (pillows, mattress, foam padding). When you are staying in bed or sitting on a chair for a long time, you should always use some pressure relief items in order to reduce pressure from your body and make yourself comfortable.

Exercise daily if possible

Exercise is extremely important for your heart, lungs and mental outlook, but it has a significant healthy impact on your skin as the blood carries oxygen and nutrients and keeps it vital.

Avoid clothing with heavy and tight seams and nylon underwear

Avoid clothes that have thick seams, buttons or zippers that press on your skin. Always keep your clothes from bunching up or wrinkling in areas where there is any pressure on your body. Also be very cautious when wearing tight or too large shoes, jewelry and other items. Check your skin regularly!



Limit the head of bed elevation to 30 degrees or as less as possible (low Fowler's position)

If the bed is higher than 30 degrees, you may start sliding down which will cause friction and shearing forces. Keep your head of the bed in the low Fowler's position unless contraindicated and prescribed other by your doctor.

Techniques to relive pressure in wheelchair

Shifting your weight is the only way to allow blood flow into an area that you have been positioned on for a long time. In a sitting position pressure MUST be relieved every 15 minutes for 30 seconds or longer. You should allow blood to come to an area that you were sitting on.

For any additional information about pressure sores consult with your Health Care Professional and visit the major sites: NPUAP:

<http://www.npuap.org> and EPUAP: <http://www.epuap.org>



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Pressure Sores

What Are Pressure Sores?

Pressure sores (also called decubiti, bedsores or skin sores) are areas of reddened/discolored or broken skin caused by staying in one position for too long, loss of sensation, changes in circulation and lack of oxygen in the compression areas.

Pressure sores can go very deep, even to the bone, cause pain and very serious infections that can lead to death. They can be prevented but are very difficult to treat when they happen. This is why prevention is very important.

A deadly bed sore can develop in a matter of hours.

However 95% of them are preventable.

People can get a pressure sore for a number of reasons.

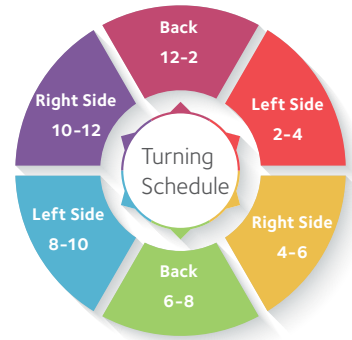
What Causes Pressure Sores And How To Prevent Them?

Pressure – Friction – Shear. These forces can be very detrimental to your health. They can make your skin irritated or even break it! Do not allow anyone to pull or drag you across the bed sheets or other surfaces (friction and shear!). Use lifting devices and lifting sheets as they lower the risk for friction and shear to a significant level.

Sitting or lying on hard surface without moving

When your skin is fragile and you are sitting or lying on a hard and/or uncomfortable surface for even a short time, you cut the blood supply to that area. That means, no nutrition and no oxygen will be delivered to your tissues and a pressure sore can develop.

You should change position at least every two hours to relieve pressure as indicated on the picture. Keep in mind that you might have to reposition yourself more often, due to your skin tolerance, especially if you already have a pressure sore. Always use pillows to position yourself for support.



Poor hygiene - irritation of the skin from moisture, urine or feces

Always keep the skin clean and dry. Never let yourself to remain wet or dirty. Use mild soap and gently wash your skin while bathing. Rinse it and dry it well and carefully! Never use alcohol based products as it burns and dries the skin!

Nutrition poor in vitamins, proteins and minerals

Poor nutrition leads to poor health, thus always have a good variety of healthy foods! Also, drink plenty of water and other fluids every day in order to moisturize your skin and keep it healthy!

Diseases that affect blood flow, including diabetes or vascular disease

Diabetes and vascular diseases can affect your blood circulation resulting in problems with proper blood flow to certain tissues which can result in a higher risk of tissue damage

Damaged skin (bruises or scrapes) and burns

Always observe your skin. If you see any signs of whiteness, redness, tearing or breaks, immediately change your position and report to your Health Care Professional.

Inspection of the skin with the mirrors should be a part of your daily routine! By inspecting the skin you can spot a problem at the very beginning! Bony areas of the body are the most likely to get sores, so be sure and look at them. Do not forget to check your feet after wearing shoes!

