

Pressure Ulcers Pressure Sores Bed Sores

What else can I do? Tell someone if you:

- Suddenly become unwell
- Have a change in your condition or circumstances
- Notice changes to the skin or bony area become sore
- You can't accept the advice or equipment given to you.

I have developed a pressure ulcer - What can I do?

- Seek help as soon as possible from your doctor or nurse.
- Follow the prevention advice in this leaflet .
- Together, you and your healthcare supporter will develop a plan of care that is acceptable to you to reduce the pressure on your skin.

For example you may require:

- Specialist equipment such as a mattress & a cushion.
- Further advice and help to change position regularly.
- Help eating a healthy diet and drinking enough fluid.
- Advice on keeping your skin healthy and dry.
- Pain relief if the pressure ulcer is uncomfortable.
- Regular wound dressing to help heal the ulcer.

Developed and endorsed by the All Wales Tissue Viability Nurse Forum, with input from the ABMU HB Pressure Ulcer Prevention & Intervention Service.
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Learn



Be Aware



Your Risk



Prevent



Manage

A Healthcare professional will have given you this leaflet as they feel you are at risk from developing pressure ulcers. Its includes information for you and your carers about pressure ulcers and how you can help to prevent them.

What is a Pressure Ulcer?

A pressure ulcer is also known as a pressure sore or bed sore. They are wounds caused by damage to your skin & tissue underneath. They can be shallow or deep.

How do you get a Pressure Ulcer?

A pressure ulcer happens when there is constant pressure on the skin. This causes blood vessels to be squashed stopping oxygen and nutrients feeding the skin which causes a wound. Pressure ulcers tend to happen over your bony areas.

What are the SIGNS & SYMPTOMS?

- The colour of your skin over a bony area may change (red, purple, black, white).
- You may notice discomfort (burning or stinging) or pain.
- The skin can become swollen, hard or blistered.

Checking your skin!

- If you notice any of the above signs immediate action is needed to stop an ulcer developing.
- Regularly check or get someone to look at your skin for changes especially over bony areas.
- If you notice changes over a bony area you must immediately move your position to take the pressure off and stop your skin becoming damaged.
- After moving, the skin may return to normal but if it doesn't, tell somebody, a friend, family member or carer. They can contact a nurse or GP who can help you.

Are you at Risk?

Risk Factor	What can I do?
 Are you able to/or do you move/change your position often enough? ✓ If you are sitting or lying in one position without moving, pressure can start to damage your skin. The way in which you move yourself or are moved can also increase the risk of skin damage i.e. dragging, slumping or sliding.	Keep moving. If big movements are not possible, small changes in position can help. You may require specialist equipment such as a different bed mattress or cushion for your chair.
 Are you able to feel all parts of your skin? ✓ If you have less or no pain or sensation in parts of your skin, pressure damage can occur without you knowing about it.	If this applies to you, be extra careful to protect yourself from pressure and trauma such as bumping yourself, rubbing, scraping
 Do you eat a nutritious diet and drink plenty of fluids? ✓ The skin can be damaged more quickly if you are not eating enough nutritious food and drinking sufficient fluid. If you are overweight you are still at risk.	Any concerns you have about eating and drinking should be discussed with a health professional i.e. nurse or doctor.
 Is your skin exposed to moisture? ✓ The risk of developing pressure ulcers increases if your skin is wet for a period of time from urine/ faeces and/or sweat. The skin becomes fragile and is easily damaged.	If your skin is frequently wet it is important that it is regularly cleaned and dried. Moisturising and barrier creams help protect the skin. Seek advice from a health professional i.e. nurse, pharmacist.
 Have you been told you have a poor blood supply to parts of your body? ✓ A poor blood supply will increase the risk of pressure ulcers because the skin has less oxygen supply.	If you have a long term condition like diabetes, peripheral vascular disease or heart disease be extra careful to protect yourself
 Do you need to wear or use a medical device? ✓ Pressure ulcers can occur under a device used for medical treatment e.g. plaster cast, oxygen mask, splint, stockings or catheter.	Keep the skin clean and dry under the device. If possible, check the skin underneath at least twice daily. Can you see any skin changes? Does it hurt? Does it feel too tight? Seek help if you become worried.