

How to Prevent Pressure Sores



What are pressure sores?

Pressure sores are areas of damage to the skin and underlying tissue.

One of the most common causes of pressure sores is sitting or lying in one position for too long. They can sometimes develop very quickly, in only a few hours.

One of the warning signs is that your skin colour doesn't return to normal, once the pressure is relieved.

Are you at risk of developing a pressure sore?

If any of the following apply to you, you may be at risk:-

- Have had a pressure sore in the past.
- Are not able to move about well.
- Sit in a chair for long periods.

- Use a wheelchair.
- Have to remain in bed.
- Have loss of sensation in parts of your body.
- Have poor circulation.
- Are weak and fatigued.
- Are incontinent.
- If eating and drinking are difficult for you.



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Areas of the body where pressure sores may develop

These are usually where bones are close to the surface of the skin and areas of your body which take your weight. The areas of skin most at risk will depend on your position but commonly include; base of the spine, buttocks and heels.

ALL body areas can be at risk of skin breakdown . The preventative measures described in this leaflet will help reduce the risk of pressure sores.

Please inform your nurse if you feel uncomfortable or too much pressure is felt in a certain area so we can take appropriate action. Please do not hesitate to ask the nurse any questions.

What can you do to help prevent pressure sores?

The nursing staff will discuss with you how we can work together to help reduce your risk of pressure sores. Simple things such as keeping your skin well moisturised, using pressure relieving equipment and standing for 5-10 minutes at regular intervals can all help take the pressure off your skin. It is important to tell the nursing staff if any areas of your skin are becoming painful or tender.

Whilst good nutrition is also important, eating and drinking can be difficult for many people. We would advise you to only eat and drink what you are able to, comfortably.

What can the nurses do to help prevent pressure sores?

Your nurse will assess your individual needs and make a plan to reduce the risk of developing a pressure sore. The plan may include;

- Inspecting skin regularly; keeping it clean, dry and well moisturised.
- Applying a barrier cream to prevent skin breakdown.
- Using a dressing to cover at risk areas or places where the skin has broken down.
- Instigating the use of pressure relieving equipment such as mattresses and cushions for prevention and comfort.
- Encouraging you to change your position regularly. If you have to stay in bed, changing position every 2-4 hours is advised. The nurses can help you with this if required. Please inform the nurses of your preferred positions, those you cannot tolerate and if you require assistance moving. This is for your comfort and to relieve any skin areas vulnerable to breaking down.

Wheelchair users

It is usually advised not to exceed 2 hours at any one time in a wheelchair as the risk of developing pressure sores is increased. Wheelchair users should change position every half an hour and move from side to side regularly to re-distribute the pressure placed on vulnerable areas.

For more information please

Call: 01803 210800 Or visit: www.rowcrofthospice.org.uk



(NICE) and Royal College of
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If you require this information
in an alternative format
please call 01803 210844

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