

Preventing pressure injuries

As your partners in care, our team is committed to working with you to ensure meaningful health outcomes.

Preventing pressure injuries is one way we can help keep you safe. Pressure injuries are avoidable conditions that can lead to significant consequences if not properly managed.

This postcard will help you understand what pressure injuries are and how we can work together to prevent them. Your care team's actions will include assessing skin, including ensuring that skin is kept moist, optimizing positioning, making sure that skin under any device is checked regularly, helping to optimize nutrition, and mostly importantly, ensuring that you understand what a pressure injury is, and how to avoid developing one.

Skin changes for pressure injuries

A pressure injury or "bed sore" is damage to the skin that can lead to serious infections if not identified and treated in a timely way. Pressure injuries usually form over bony areas of the body.

How to avoid pressure injuries

Prevention is key and there are a number of things you can do to help avoid the onset of a pressure injury.



Eat healthy foods and drink plenty of water or follow your dietitian's recommended intake.



Reposition your body throughout the day (in bed or wheelchair etc). Ask for assistance if needed.



Walk around your room or hallway throughout the day (if able)



Avoid raising your bed more than 30 degrees, except when eating, to prevent sliding down



Keep skin moist by using a pH neutral cleanser and/or moisturizer. Avoid dry skin.

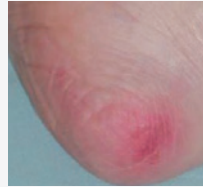
Checking skin for changes

As partners in care, it is important as a client or family caregiver to let your care team know if you notice changes to your skin or experience discomfort, so we can inspect and put into action measure to prevent a pressure injury.

- ✔ Check skin twice (2) daily. Morning and evening during undressing is a good time to do it. More times may be required if lying or sitting more than usual.
- ✔ Check the whole body, especially around bony areas like shoulders, elbows, lower back and buttocks and around scars or skin that has previously broken.
- ✔ Look for redness, blisters, opening skin or rashes.
- ✔ Feel for heat in red areas with your finger.
- ✔ Use a long-handled mirror to check your skin, especially in areas hard to see.

What does a pressure injury look like?

A pressure injury can start as mild redness that does not go away when there is no longer pressure on the area (sometimes up to 20 minutes). The best way to avoid complications is to treat the redness before the skin breaks open, which can lead to infection down the muscle or bone underneath.



Stage I
Non-blanchable
erythema



Stage II
Partial thickness
skin loss



Stage III
Full thickness
skin loss



Stage IV
Full thickness
tissue loss



**Unstageable
pressure injury**
depth unknown



**Suspected deep
tissue injury**
depth unknown

Source: <http://www.open.hqsc.govt.nz/assets/Patient-Safety-Week/PR/2016-resources/ACCPressureInjuryStagingChart.pdf>.

How to treat a pressure injury

Treatment for a pressure injury includes:

- Reducing the pressure to the area of the injury;
- Improving nutrition; and
- Treating the injury itself with an appropriate dressing.

If you are concerned about pressure injuries, speak to your care team, such as doctor, nurse practitioner, nurse or clinician about you or your child's care. Wounds may take a long time to heal, therefore prevention is key!

If you have any questions or need guidance, reach out to your care team.
They are here to help you!

Holland Bloorview
Kids Rehabilitation Hospital