

PRESSURE INJURY PREVENTION

INFORMATION FOR PEOPLE AT RISK

Pressure injury

A pressure injury, also referred to as a pressure ulcer or bed sore, is an injury to the skin caused by unrelieved pressure. It may occur when you are unable to move due to illness, injury or surgery. A pressure injury can develop at home or in hospital.

They may develop from poorly-fitted shoes, underplasters, splints or braces, and around medical equipment such as tubes, masks or drains.

Pressure injuries can happen quickly, from lying or sitting in the same position for too long. They can be painful, take a long time to heal, and may lead to other complications.



People at increased risk

You have an increased risk of developing a pressure injury if you are:

- elderly or very young
- immobile or unable to reposition yourself
- underweight, eating poorly or have experienced recent weight loss
- overweight
- incontinent (bladder and/or bowel)
- experiencing reduced sensation/feeling

Warning signs of a pressure injury

- redness or skin discolouration
- tenderness, pain, or itching in affected areas
- blistering
- broken skin

Reducing your risk of pressure injury

There are a number of simple things you can do to help reduce your risk of developing a pressure injury.

Move frequently to relieve pressure

Reposition yourself, or ask your carers to assist you to change your position. You can also ask them to regularly remind you to change your position.

Eat a healthy diet and drink fluids regularly *unless you are on fluid restriction*

You may benefit from nutritional supplements if you are underweight, have recently lost weight, or have been eating poorly. Speak to a health care professional for advice.

Keep your skin clean and dry

Regularly change incontinence pads. Use a soap-free cleanser and moisturiser, if appropriate.



Look after your feet

Check for signs of pressure injury on your feet. If you have diabetes or reduced sensation, check your feet regularly. Wear comfortable, well-fitted shoes.

Use appropriate equipment

Ensure any equipment you are using is in good working order and regularly maintained. Specialised pressure-relieving equipment, such as cushions and mattresses, may be required if you are identified as being at risk of developing a pressure injury, or currently have a pressure injury.

Check your skin

Where possible, check your skin at least daily for signs of a pressure injury. If you are experiencing any warning signs speak to a health care professional for advice.

Early sign of a pressure injury

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Acknowledgements

National Pressure Ulcer Advisory Panel, European Pressure Ulcer Advisory Panel and Pan Pacific Pressure Injury Alliance. Prevention and Treatment of Pressure Ulcers: Clinical Practice Guideline. Emily Haesler (Ed.). Cambridge Media: Perth, Australia; 2014.

About the Pressure Injury Prevention Project

The Pressure Injury Prevention Project is a project run by the Clinical Excellence Commission. It promotes best practice for the prevention and management of pressure injuries. For further information on the Pressure Injury Prevention Project, visit

www.cec.health.nsw.gov.au/programs/pressure-injury-prevention-project

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The diagrams below show the areas of the body at risk of pressure injury when lying and sitting.

