

What is a Pressure Injury?

A pressure injury may be called a “bedsore” by those, not in the medical field. This type of wound is caused by too much pressure. For example, if you are sitting or lying in one position for too long. The blood flow slows down, and your skin and tissue can die causing a wound. These types of wounds are painful and very hard-to-heal. The risk of infection is high.

Who is at Risk?

- Incontinence of stool or urine
- Age
- Serious illnesses
- Poor nutrition
- Immobility
- Moisture
- Posture/deformity
- Friction
- Sensory loss
- Body type



The most common places for a pressure ulcer or injury is over a bony area such as the heel, tailbone, elbow, hip, shoulder, and back of the head. You can also develop a pressure injury due to a medical device such as a splint, cast, catheter, and brief. People at risk for pressure ulcers include those who cannot move or reposition on their own, poor seating positions in a wheelchair or up in bed, poor health, weakness, paralysis, unable to control their bowels or bladder, recovery from surgery, dehydration, and poor appetite.



- Inspect skin daily. Look for redness or breaks in the skin. You should notify your doctor of any changes.
- Avoid aggressive massage or massaging over bony areas like the hips. Use moisturizers, especially after a bath or shower.
- If you have accidents of urine or stool, it is especially important to make sure your skin is cleansed, dried, and protected using a barrier cream such as zinc oxide that is found in diaper rash products to prevent skin breakdown. Use sanitary pads or disposable underwear that are absorbent and help wick away moisture from your skin.

What can you do?

Shift your weight every 15 minutes while sitting up in a chair. Turn from your back to either side every 2 hours or less while in bed. Use a 3-4-inch wheelchair chair cushion while sitting on any surface. Use good posture while sitting. Keep the head of the bed as low as possible while in bed. The higher up the head of the bed is, the more pressure is on your tailbone. Use pillows or wedges to help take the pressure off high-pressure point areas (heels, tailbone, knees, and hips). For heels, you can use pillows lengthwise to make sure heels are off the bed. Follow your doctor's recommendations for diet and fluid intake.

When should I call my doctor about my wound?

- Increased pain
- Increased swelling
- Red and warmth surrounding wound and or skin
- Increased drainage
- Smelly drainage after cleansing your wound during dressing changes.

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