

If you have any questions you wish to discuss, please write them here -

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Further contact information

You can contact the tissue viability specialist nurses Monday - Friday, 8am - 4pm on 0151 430 1928 (**Whiston, St Helens & Newton sites**) or 01704704302 (**Southport & Ormskirk sites**)

For further information:
www.nice.org.uk

This patient information leaflet was developed in conjunction with The Cheshire & Merseyside Pressure Ulcer Steering Group.



Whiston Hospital
Warrington Road,
Prescot, Merseyside, L35 5DR
Telephone: 0151 426 1600

Southport Hospital
Town Lane, Kew,
Southport, Merseyside,
PR8 6PN
Telephone: 01704 547 471

St Helens Hospital
Marshalls Cross Road,
St Helens, Merseyside, WA9
3DA Telephone: 01744 26633

Ormskirk Hospital
Dicconson Way, Wigan Road,
Ormskirk, Lancashire, L39 2AZ
Telephone: 01695 577 111

Helping to prevent pressure ulcers

If you need this leaflet in a different language or accessible format please speak to a member of staff who can arrange it for you.

اگر به این بروشور به زبان دیگر یا در قالب دسترس پذیر نیاز دارید، لطفاً با یکی از کارکنان صحبت کنید تا آن را برای شما تهیه کنند.

Jeśli niniejsza ulotka ma być dostępna w innym języku lub formacie, proszę skontaktować się z członkiem personelu, który ją dla Państwa przygotowuje.

Dacă aveți nevoie de această broșură într-o altă limbă sau într-un format accesibil, vă rog să discutați cu un membru al personalului să se ocupe de acest lucru pentru dumneavoastră

如果您需要本传单的其他语言版本或无障碍格式，请联系工作人员为您安排。

إذا احتجت إلى هذه النشرة بلغة أخرى، أو بتنسيق يسهل الوصول إليه، يرجى التحدث إلى أحد الموظفين لترتيب ذلك لك.

What is a pressure ulcer?

A pressure ulcer is an area of damaged skin, that may be known as 'bedsores'. Pressure ulcers can happen by sitting or lying in one position for too long without moving, or from any medical devices you may be using. There are a few examples below.

If there is pressure to an area blood cannot circulate, causing a lack of oxygen and nutrition to the skin; if the pressure continues then damage can occur very quickly.

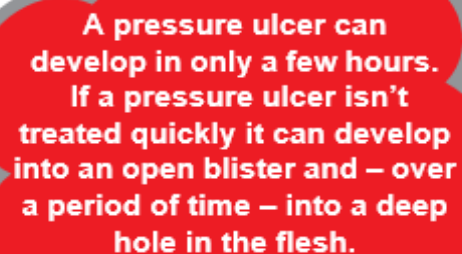
If the skin changes colour, feels hard or if a warm area develops and if there is a loss of feeling or pain in an area, this may be a sign that a pressure ulcer is developing.

If you do not move, or are unable to move, you may develop changes to your skin such as a red or purple area which can become sore, patches that have become very hard, patches that are soft or boggy or patches that are darker than they may usually be.

Early signs of a pressure ulcer

Redness, discomfort, pain, patches of hard skin, blue/purple patches, blisters or visible skin damage or areas that are cool or hot.

Report any skin changes immediately to your carer or healthcare professional, who can advise on pressure area care.



A pressure ulcer can develop in only a few hours. If a pressure ulcer isn't treated quickly it can develop into an open blister and – over a period of time – into a deep hole in the flesh.

Your healthcare professional/carer will also use things to keep pressure off your heels to stop them from getting sore. This is referred to as offloading. These will be discussed with you and you will be shown what to do with them.

This leaflet has been produced to support you in making informed choices about your care

Usually on the parts of the body which take your weight and where the bone is close to the surface. They can take a long time to heal and are painful. Sometimes they get infected. It is much better to stop this from happening.

For patients who are palliative or approaching end of life

To minimise potential pain and discomfort, we will continue to check your loved one's skin and help with position changes. These can be small and subtle, often a 30 degree tilted move is all that is needed to relieve pressure.

We recognise that you may not want your loved one, or your time spent with them to be disturbed too often. The nurses will endeavour to coincide position changes with other aspects of care, such as personal hygiene and medical device monitoring.

Despite interventions a pressure ulcer may still occur.

If you have any concerns or questions about changing of position, please speak to the nurses who will be able to explain further.

For patients who have a spinal injury

Keeping your skin healthy is very important. If you notice any marking to your skin at all, then ideally you should stay off this area. When the marking has gone, build time up in the chair slowly. Staff will help change your position as part of your prevention plan.

Your healthcare professional/carer will:

Look at your skin in line with the plan of care agreed with you. They may need to ask if they can look at embarrassing body parts of your body i.e. bottom. They will ask you to change your position, or if you are unable to, advise carers to assist you. This will be planned with you.

Advice might include:

- How to adjust your sitting and lying position
- How often you need to move or be moved
- How to support your feet and elevate your heels
- Which equipment you should use and how to use it

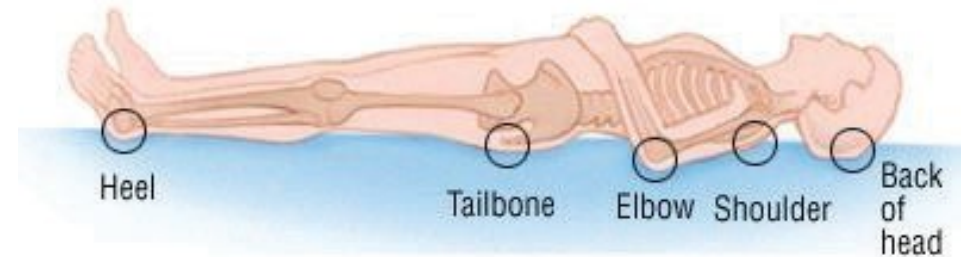
Your care givers will be advised of the best way to assist you to reposition if you cannot move yourself. This will be discussed with you at each visit. If you only have a one off visit, you will be provided with the information you need, in the form of this leaflet and a discussion about how you can help yourself to prevent pressure ulcers. It would be beneficial to share this leaflet with your family members or anyone who has any input into your care, to raise awareness of how to prevent pressure ulcers occurring.

Equipment that can help prevent pressure ulcers

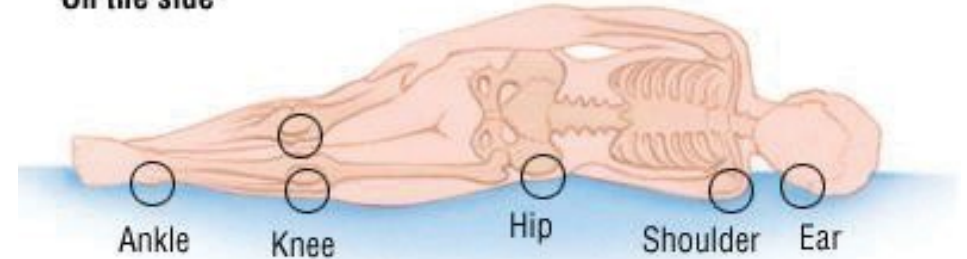
Your plan of care may include specialist equipment such as;

- A special bed - do not use your heels to push yourself up the bed. It is advised that you lift your heels before changing the position of the bed, if you do not it can cause skin damage
- Special mattress - this would be filled with air or made of a special foam
- Cushions - these would redistribute pressure while you are sitting in a chair.
- Slide sheets - these will be used to help change your position.

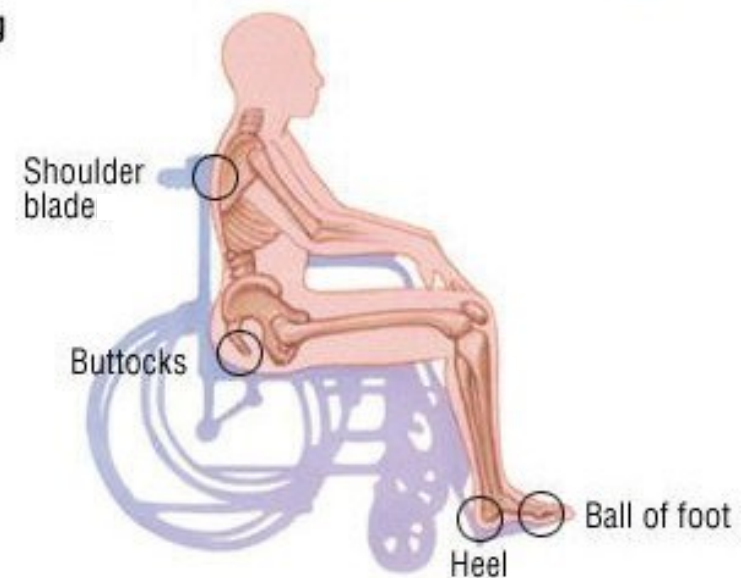
On the back



On the side



Sitting



Be aware that some essential medical devices can cause pressure damage



Implications of having a pressure ulcer

People who have had a pressure ulcer describe them as something that:

- Was “embarrassing and smelly, got infected and stopped me doing what I wanted to do”
- “Made me feel like a burden, really unwell and stopped me going to work or even having a social life”
- Was “painful, caused broken sleep and even stopped me sleeping at all”

Pressure ulcers can take a long time to heal and could mean you have to stay in bed for a very long time - months.

Ways to prevent a pressure ulcer

- A good way to remember this is **ASSKING**, this stands for;

A risk assessment – will be completed. If you are at risk, a care plan appropriate to your needs will be made with you.

- **Skin inspection** – check your skin as often as you can. If you cannot check it yourself, tell someone if you feel sore or uncomfortable particularly if this is on your heels or bottom. If you are unable to feel if you are getting sore, try to move more often. If you have any contracted limbs, it is important that they are checked. Do not rub skin as this can remove the top layer causing damage.
- **Surface** – if you are assessed as being at risk of developing pressure ulcers you will be offered special equipment, which is mentioned below. This can help to prevent a pressure ulcer occurring. It is very important that your chair is the right height and width for you to prevent you from sliding as this can damage your skin.
- **Keep moving** – this is very important. Stand or walk as much as possible, or if in bed try to roll onto alternate sides as often as you can or as discussed with your health professional. Keep moving as much as you can. If you can walk around, please ensure that your footwear fits correctly to prevent skin damage. If you are assessed as being at high risk of developing a pressure ulcer and choose not to keep moving, even though you can, this will lead to you developing very severe damage that can put you at risk of very serious infections.
- **Incontinence** – it is important to deal with any continence concerns, as these can damage your skin and make you more at risk of pressure ulcers. If you develop sore or chapped skin, let your health professional or carer know. Use a barrier cream to protect skin and wash with a mild non-perfumed cleanser.
- **Nutrition** – plays a very important role in preventing pressure ulcers. Nutritional needs will be discussed with you and a plan made, to ensure that you are eating and drinking what you should.
- **Give information** – it is important that you understand the information given to you. If you are unclear please speak to your health care professional or carer.