

### 3: Positioning your Body

Shift your position slightly every 15 minutes, and change your position every 2 hours.

#### When you are in bed:

To lessen the pressure on the bony areas:

- Lie on your side at about 30 degrees with your hips and shoulders tilted.
- Keep the head of your bed down.
- Only raise the head of your bed higher than 30 degrees when you eat or are getting out of bed.
- When you raise the head of your bed, raise the foot of your bed first.
- Put pillows under your calves to keep your heels off the mattress or any surface at all times.

#### When you sit in a chair or wheelchair:

Use a proper sitting position at all times:

- Keep your head aligned over your pelvis.
- Keep your hips and knees close to a right angle (90 degrees).
- Keep your feet on a supportive surface.
- Slightly shift your position every 2 hours.
- Ask for help when you need it.

#### When you use the bathroom:

- Consider using a padded seat and mobility aids that reduce pressure.
- Ask your health care provider about your options.

### 4: Staying Active

- Keep active. Try to manage some of your own care as it will help your general health and build muscle strength.
- Ask your health care providers for help with your care activities.

### 5: Proper Nutrition

- Eat a healthy diet with enough protein (protein helps the body heal).
- Drink at least 6 cups (1500ml) of water or fluids everyday.
- If you are on a special diet, talk to your primary care provider or dietitian.
- If you smoke, try to quit or cut down.

#### Ask for help if:

- you have redness, purple skin, a blister, or open area on your skin
- You are not able to change your position
- You are not able to control urine or bowel movements
- You need a special mattress or a mechanical lift to reduce the pressure on your bony areas

**Talk to your health care team about keeping your skin healthy.**

*For more information, please contact your local hospital or health centre.*

**Une version française de ce document est disponible.**



## Pressure Injury



### How to Prevent and Recognize Pressure Injuries

## What is a Pressure Injury?

A pressure injury, sometimes called a “bed sore” or “pressure ulcer,” is an injury to the skin and/or the tissues under the skin. A pressure injury is caused when an area of skin is placed under constant pressure. Constant pressure on an area of skin reduces blood supply to the area and over time it can cause the skin to break down and form an open sore known as a pressure injury. Pressure injuries generally form over bony areas, where there is little cushion between the bone and the skin.

## What causes a Pressure Injury?

Constant pressure on the skin can cause a pressure injury. For example:

- Sitting and Lying in one position for too long.
- Sliding down in a bed or chair, forcing the skin to fold over itself (shear force).
- Being pulled across bed sheets or other surface (friction burns).
- Pressure from tubing (oxygen, infusion) and medical devices (splints) on skin.

## Who could get a Pressure Injury?

You are more likely to get a pressure injury if:

- You have fragile or thin skin.
- You are not drinking enough fluids or not eating enough healthy foods.

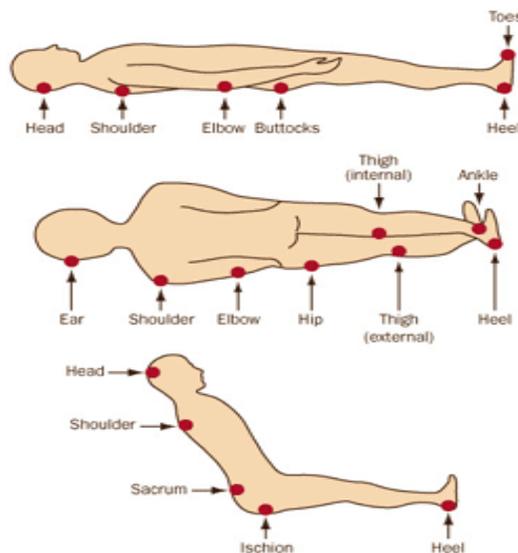
- You are unable to control your bladder (urine) or bowel movements (stool/poop).
- You are unable to move or have had a stroke, diabetes, or spinal cord injury.
- You have memory issues.

## Common Pressure Injury Locations

Most pressure injury form on the lower part of the body, including:

- over the tailbone,
- on the back along the spine, and
- on the buttocks, hips, and heels.

Other common spots are on the back of the head, the back of the ear, the shoulders, elbows, and between the knees where the legs rub together.



## How can I Prevent a Pressure Injury?

### 1: Clean your skin

- Wash your skin every day with water, unscented soap and a soft cloth.
- Dab your skin and skin folds dry with a clean towel.
- Moisturize your skin with unscented lotion twice each day.
- Keep your nails short and clean.
- Every day, check the skin on your heels and bony areas for redness, a change in colour, or open areas.
- If you use incontinence products (pad, brief, diaper), apply a small amount of moisturizing cream on your skin as a barrier.

### Do not:

- Scrub your skin with heavy pressure.
- Use hot water or powder.
- Apply cream or lotion between your toes.
- Rub bony or reddened area.
- Use multiple layers of incontinence products underneath you when you are already using a special cushion or mattress.

### 2: When changing your position

- Avoid dragging your skin along the bed or seat.
- If part of your body must slide across the surface, use devices like slider sheets or an overhead trapeze bar.