

What you can do to help

Advise the nurses if there is any pain or redness over a site common to pressure ulcers, such as the buttocks, tailbone, shoulder blades, knee or ankle bones, and heel of the foot.

Bring appropriate clothing and footwear from home.

Encourage activity.

Encourage meals, snacks, and fluids. Check with nursing for any special instructions.

Encourage repositioning in bed or chair and to shift weight as often as possible.

Encourage participation in bathing/showering/ cleansing.

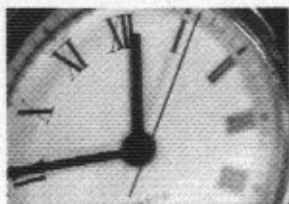
Be sure the call light is in reach when you leave.

Provide accurate phone numbers for family or other responsible parties.

TURN...

TURN...

TURN...



Prevention

Prevention, when and where possible, is the best care for pressure ulcers. Some preventative steps include, where appropriate:

- √ Identifying persons at risk and assessing the skin for early signs of problems
- √ Changing the sheets to provide a smooth clean surface for skin
- √ Frequent change in positioning
- √ Maintaining nutrition
- √ Provide padding and seating/lying surfaces which support and reduce pressure
- √ Keep skin clean, dry, and protected from shearing and friction
- √ Do not massage bony prominences
- √ Consult with a nurse or doctor prior to using hot water, soap, creams, ointments or powders
- √ Protect elbows and heels by using special garments/ pillows/ padding, etc

Cheryl Boldt
"Sensible Solutions for Healthcare"
1203 S. Main
Sioux Falls, SD 57105
Phone 605-351-8547
Fax 605-351-8547
clboldt@attglobal.net

Pressure Ulcers



"PARTNERS in CARING"

**An Educational Guide
for
Residents and Families**

What is a Pressure Ulcer?



A *Pressure Ulcer* is an injury usually caused by unrelieved pressure that damages the skin and underlying tissue. Pressure Ulcers are also known as bed sores or decubitus ulcers. They can range in severity from mild (minor skin reddening) to severe (deep craters down to muscle and bone).

Unrelieved pressure on the skin squeezes tiny blood vessels, which supply the skin with nutrients and oxygen. When the skin is starved of oxygen and nutrients for too long, the tissue dies and a pressure ulcer forms. The affected area may feel warmer than surrounding tissue. Skin reddening that disappears after pressure is removed is normal and not a pressure ulcer.

Other factors can cause pressure ulcers, too. If a person slides down in the bed or chair, blood vessels can stretch or bend and cause pressure ulcers. Even slight rubbing or friction on the skin may cause minor pressure ulcers.

Pressure Ulcers can develop quickly, especially in a person whose health is already compromised. Pressure Ulcers may take a long time to heal, depending on a person's age and physical condition.

The treatment for a pressure ulcer requires all members of a person's healthcare team to provide approaches that promote healing. This team includes the person with the pressure ulcer and their family members, who can assist as "Partners in Caring".

Risk Factors and Effects of Aging

Many elderly -because of serious medical problems, decreased appetite, and decreased mobility- are at risk for pressure ulcers.

Some unavoidable changes due to AGING which make pressure ulcers more likely include::

- ✓ Decrease in body fat causing less padding over the bones
- ✓ Slower wound healing
- ✓ Decreased blood flow to the tissues
- ✓ Diminished sensation and ability to recognize pain
- ✓ Bowel and/or urinary incontinence

Some RISK FACTORS for pressure ulcers include:

- ✓ Reduced mobility due to osteoarthritis, stroke, or other paralyzing illness/ injury
- ✓ Inability to get out of or move in bed due to illness/ injury
- ✓ Acute illness, such as pneumonia
- ✓ Poor nutrition
- ✓ Age (over 70 years)
- ✓ Indirect pressure (like friction)
- ✓ Decreased mental awareness due to anesthesia, effects of other medication, or dementia
- ✓ Decreased sensation due to diabetes, strokes, or other causes
- ✓ Recent surgical procedure

Treatment

The treatment of pressure ulcers may include:

- ✓ Relieving the pressure to the affected area and treating any pain
- ✓ Keeping the area as clean as possible
- ✓ Using dressings with a moist healing rather than dry bandages
- ✓ Treating infection when present
- ✓ Food and fluids

