

Pressure Ulcer Prevention

for Patients



Tips to keep you safe

Pressure Ulcer Risk Checklist

Who is at risk for a pressure ulcer?

You are at risk for a pressure ulcer if you answer YES to any of the following:

- ✓ **Do you have problems with food intake, weight loss or other nutritional problems?**
- ✓ **Have you been told you have anemia?**
- ✓ **Do you have diabetes or heart trouble?**
- ✓ **Is your skin very dry?**
- ✓ **Do you lose bowel or bladder control?**
- ✓ **Are you an elderly adult?**
- ✓ **Do you have trouble shifting position in bed, moving around or walking?**
- ✓ **Do you spend most of your time in bed or in a chair?**

Make sure you ask for help if you need it.



Getting out of bed



Repositioning in the bed or chair



Getting to the bathroom



Padding your body with pillows to avoid pressure



If you have pain or discomfort on your skin



If you lose control of your bowels or bladder



Getting a drink of water

What should you do if you think you are developing a pressure ulcer?

Call your doctor immediately if you think there is any chance you are developing a pressure ulcer.

What is a Pressure Ulcer?

A pressure ulcer is sometimes called a bed sore and it can form anywhere on your body where your skin is pressed or rubbed against a bed or chair surface. Pressure ulcers are painful and **can** cause many complications.

What causes a pressure ulcer?

Pressure ulcers are caused by too much pressure against a bony area of your skin.

Skin can also break down easily if it is exposed to urine or feces and can tear easily if you drag yourself across a bed.

Where do pressure ulcers usually develop?

- Tail bone
- Heels
- Back of head
- Ankles
- Hips
- Any other bony area on your skin



How can you prevent development of a pressure ulcer?

- Follow all of your doctor's orders
- If you are able to move around easily, make sure you get out of bed or shift positions in your chair or bed every 15 – 30 minutes if possible
- Look at your skin (or ask for help) every day to make sure there are no areas of redness or ulcers developing
- Keep your skin clean and make sure it does not get too dry or too moist
 - Use a pH balanced soap and hypoallergenic moisturizer
 - If you lose control of your bowel or bladder functions, you should be cleaned right away
 - Apply a barrier ointment right after cleaning off any urine or feces to protect your skin
- Eat a healthy diet and drink plenty of water
- If you must stay in bed, turn at least every 1 – 2 hours onto your right side, then your back, then left side and so on to alternate the pressure on the skin
- When sitting or lying down, pad areas of your body with pillows to prevent pressure
- If you are lying in bed, keep the head of your bed as low as possible (but follow any other doctor's orders) to avoid too much pressure on your tail bone and hips and so you do not slide down in the bed



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3800 E. Centre Ave.
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www.stryker.com

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