

Preventing Pressure Injuries (Bed Sores)



MELBOURNE HEALTH

Summary Points to Remember

- Most pressure injuries are preventable
- Move as much as you can. If you can't move, it is essential that someone helps you to change your position regularly
- If you would like more information, please talk to your nurse

What is a pressure injury?

A pressure injury (also known as a pressure ulcer or a bed sore) is an area of skin that has been damaged due to unrelieved pressure.

Pressure injuries may look minor, such as redness on the skin but they can hide more damage under the skin surface.

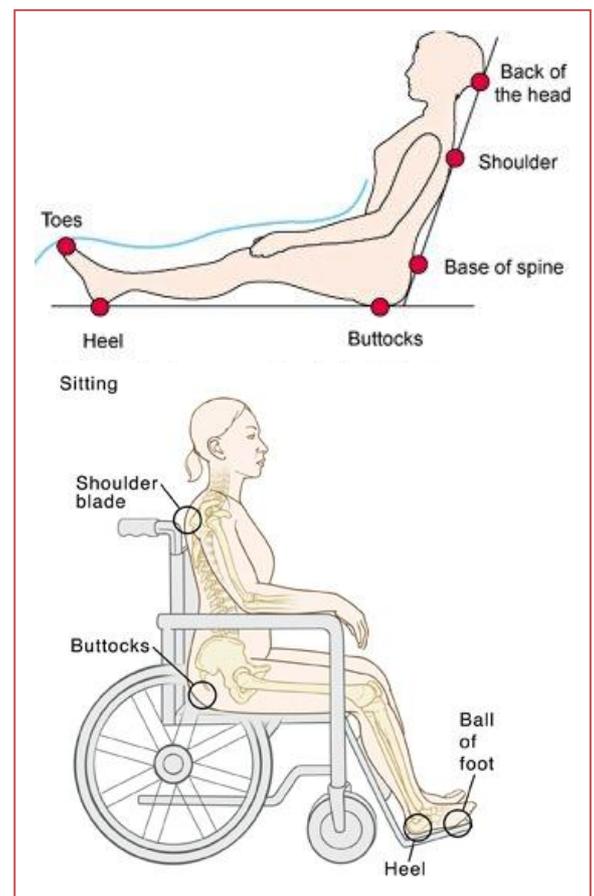
Pressure injuries usually occur over bony areas, especially heels, hips, under buttocks and even toes where the pressure may be unrelieved.

Who could develop a pressure injury?

- Anyone who is confined to a bed or a chair.
- Anyone who has loss of sensation, loss of bowel or bladder control.
- Anyone who has poor nutrition or is unwell.
- Anyone who is disinclined to move.

What can you do to prevent pressure injuries?

- The best thing you can do is to relieve the pressure by keeping active, and changing your position frequently off the point of pressure, whether you are lying in a bed or sitting in a chair.
- If you are unable to move yourself the staff will help you to change position regularly.
- Special equipment such as air mattresses, cushions or booties may be used to reduce the pressure in particular areas.
- Keep your skin and bedding dry; let staff know if your bed is damp.
- Be aware of hard surfaces you may be lying against such as plastic tubes or folded sheets.
- Keep your sheet loosely tucked in.



Common bony areas where pressure injuries may occur

- Let staff know if you have any soreness, blistered, reddened or broken skin.
- Avoid massaging your skin over bony areas.
- Use a soap free or appropriate pH cleanser and moisturise regularly.
- Staff may use special dressings on your heels and buttocks to help prevent pressure injuries.

Links and references

- Consumer Information, Victorian Government Health Information where you may find further information
[http://www.health.vic.gov.au/pressureulcers/consumer.htm#Preventing_pressure_ulcers – An information booklet for patients](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/pressureulcers/consumer.htm#Preventing_pressure_ulcers_-_An_information_booklet_for_patients)
- Better Health Channel, Pressure Sore fact sheet
http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Pressure_sores

If after discharge from hospital you have any concerns please call the number below or see your General Practitioner.

Contact

Practitioner / Patient notes

Clinical Nurse Consultant
Wound Management
Nursing Services

Ph: 9342 4134

Nursing Services | MH02.11.09B | Skin Integrity Committee | May 2014



MELBOURNE HEALTH



The information contained in this brochure is for educational purposes only and is not intended as a substitute for consultation with a doctor or health care professional