

PREVENTING PRESSURE ULCER

<i>Client:</i>	<i>Date:</i>
<i>Clinician:</i>	

Pressure sores can develop quickly, even in healthy skin. That's the reason why taking steps to prevent them is so important. Taking pressure off the skin is the first step. That means changing positions often, supporting the body, and avoiding rubbing and sliding. Keeping the skin clean, eating well, and stretching the joints and muscles can also help prevent pressure sores.

Change Positions Often

- IN A CHAIR
 - Shift weight from side to side at least once an hour—every 15 minutes if you can.
 - Ask about pads and cushions that reduce pressure on the skin.
- IN BED
 - Change positions at least every 2 hours, more often if you can
 - Use lightweight sheets and blankets to reduce pressure from above.
 - Ask about special pads and mattresses that spread pressure over a larger area of the body

Support the Body

- IN A CHAIR
 - Lightly cushion the back and buttocks. Don't use donut-type cushions. They can cut off the blood supply to the skin.
 - Lightly pad the footrest on a wheelchair.
- IN BED
 - When lying on your back, put pillows under the lower calves and ankles. Keep the elbows slightly bent.
 - When lying on your side, put pillows behind the back, between the legs, and between the ankles. Keep elbows and knees slightly bent.

Avoid Rubbing/Sliding

- IN A CHAIR
 - Keep the feet on a footrest, so the thighs are horizontal. This keeps the buttocks from sliding forward
 - Support the shoulder blades and back with a pillow

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Contact the on-call nurse if you are experiencing any change in your current health condition.
For ALL emergencies requiring IMMEDIATE medical attention, call 911.

- IN BED
 - Keep the sheets smooth, dry, and free of crumbs. Use a sheepskin pad to prevent rubbing.
 - Keep the feet and head slightly raised to avoid sliding. Don't raise the head more than 30 degrees, however, except to allow sitting up to eat.

Keep the Skin Clean

- Clean the skin of sweat, urine, or wound drainage
- Apply protective creams and use absorbent pads for someone who lacks bladder or bowel control.

Provide Good Food and Movement

Someone who's in a bed or a wheelchair most or all of the time needs to:

- Eat enough calories to maintain a stable weight
- Get plenty of protein, vitamins, and iron, and drink lots of fluids each day.
- Get out of the bed or chair as much as possible

When to Notify the Nurse

Notify the nurse if you experience these symptoms:

- New onset or increased pain
- Any sign of open skin
- An ulcer that gets worse or begins to smell
- A fever above 101 F

Publication Source: Clay, KS, Evidence-Based Pressure Ulcer Prevention, 2005

Publication Source: Thomas DR, The Cleveland Clinic Journal of Medicine, 68(8), Prevention and treatment of pressure ulcers: What works? What doesn't? Aug 2001, pp 704-22

Online Source: National Guideline Clearinghouse

[http://www.guideline.gov/summary/summary.aspx?doc_id=3511&nbr=2737&string=preventing+AND+pressure+AND+ulcers]

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