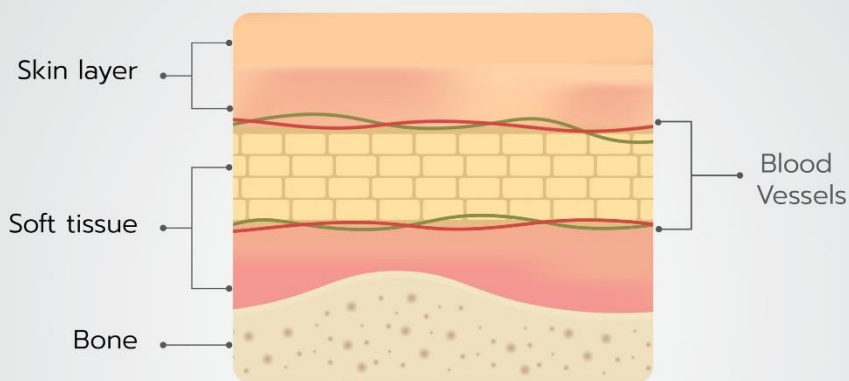


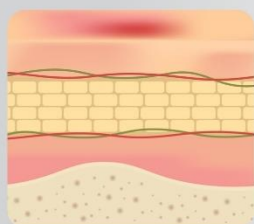
Department of
Occupational Therapy

Pressure Injury Prevention

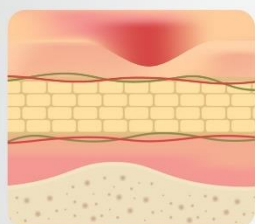
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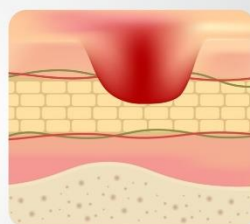
Stages of Pressure Sores



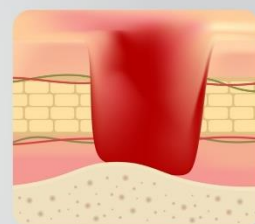
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- Tips to manage ongoing pressure injuries

1. Introduction to Pressure Injuries

What are Pressure Injuries?

Pressure injuries are:

- Wounds that develop due to **prolonged periods of pressure** that **reduce blood flow** to the skin
- A common complication that arises from long periods of lying or sitting in one position



Improper skin care and **increased friction** between the skin and clothing/bedding can contribute to pressure injury development.

Why is it Important to Prevent Pressure Injuries?

Pressure injuries are difficult and costly to manage once they develop.

If they are not prevented or treated in a timely manner, pressure injuries may:

- Cause your loved one significant pain and discomfort
- Decrease your loved one's ability to engage in daily activities
- Increase the risk of infections
- Be life-threatening.



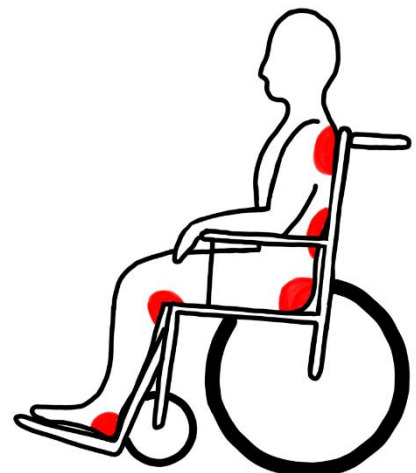
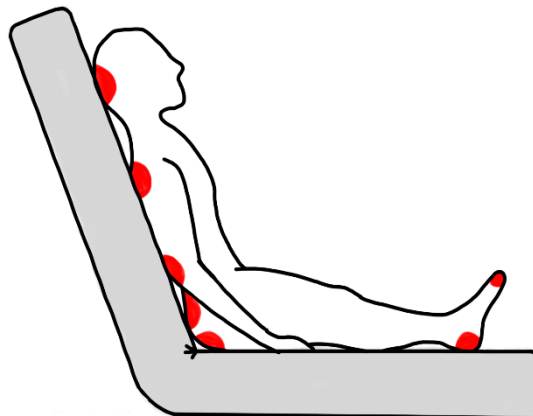
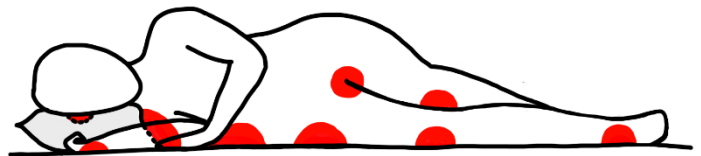
1. Introduction to Pressure Injuries

Where Do Pressure Injuries Commonly Develop?

Pressure injuries form the most frequently on areas where the bony parts of the body press against another surface (E.g. Other body parts or a mattress or chair).

Common sites for pressure injuries include:

- Back of the head
- Ears
- Shoulder blade
- Elbows
- Hips
- Inner knees
- Lower back
- Groin
- Buttocks
- Ankles
- Heels



1. Introduction to Pressure Injuries

What Increases the Risk of Pressure Injuries?

1. Old age

- Increases the risk of skin tears as the skin gets thinner and less elastic with age

2. Poor nutrition and dehydration

- Causes a decrease in muscles and fat, which lowers the protection offered to the skin
- May cause the skin to become more fragile

3. Reduced sensation, mobility and mental awareness

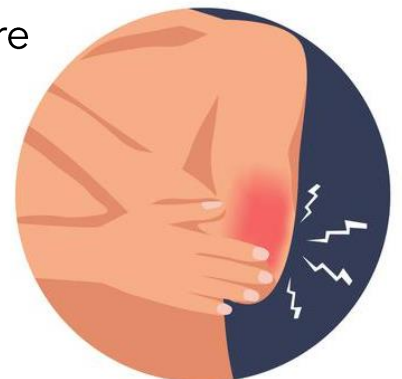
- Reduces your loved one's ability to respond to pain and reposition themselves regularly

4. Loss of control over urinary and bowel movement (incontinence)

- Increases the risk of skin breakdown and infections due to prolonged exposure to urine or faeces.

5. Obesity

- Increased weight causes increased pressure on the skin.



2. Tips to Prevent Pressure Injuries

General Tips to Reduce the Risk of Pressure Injuries

1. Keep your loved one moving regularly

- Engage your loved one in activities that keep them moving throughout the day
- Use a positioning schedule to remind yourself when to reposition your loved one if he or she is confined to the bed or chair



2. Use loose-fitting clothes

- Reduces friction against the skin
- Avoid clothes with thick seams, buttons or zips which may press onto the skin



3. Use pressure-relieving surfaces (e.g. cushions or mattresses)

- Distributes your body weight evenly across a larger surface area
- Speak to an occupational therapist for equipment recommendations

2. Tips to Prevent Pressure Injuries

4. Inspect your loved one's skin at least twice a day

- Pay attention to areas that are at increased risk of sores (page 4)
- Use a mirror to inspect areas that are difficult to see

Look for areas that:

- Remain red after pressure has been removed
- Feel **warmer, harder** or **more spongy** than surrounding skin



5. Ensure good skin care and hygiene

- Keep the skin clean, dry and well-moisturised
- Apply a skin barrier cream as recommended
- Minimise prolonged contact with urine, stools, sweat or fluid from wounds
- Clean the skin gently with a soft cloth or sponge

If your loved one is incontinent:

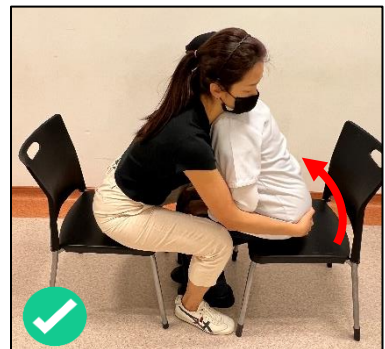
- Improve access to toilets or use a commode.
- Clean and change soiled incontinence aids regularly.



2. Tips to Prevent Pressure Injuries

Tips for Positioning in a Chair

- Keep the feet of your loved one well-supported
 - Their knees should not be propped above their hip level
- Ensure that they shift their weight every 15-20 minutes:
 - Lean them forward
 - Hold that position for at least 30 seconds
 - Lean them to one side
 - Hold that position for at least 30 seconds
 - Lean them to the other side and hold for 30 seconds



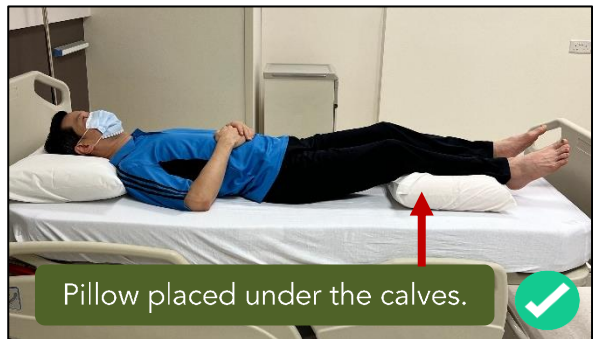
Speak to a healthcare professional regarding the appropriate sitting duration for your loved one.

2. Tips to Prevent Pressure Injuries

Tips for Positioning in Bed

Do:

1. Turn your loved one every 2 hours
2. Use a **slide sheet** or **bed sheet** when shifting your loved one to reduce friction
3. Use **pillows** or **heel protectors** to prevent their knees, ankles and heels from pressing into each other or the mattress.



4. When lying sideways, place a pillow under your loved one's back and buttocks.



2. Tips to Prevent Pressure Injuries

Tips for Positioning in Bed:

Avoid these positions for prolonged periods:

1. Propping your loved one up at an angle of more than 30 degrees
2. Positioning their legs such that the knees are completely straight
3. Lying directly on the bony part of their hip or shoulder



Do your loved one have a recent hip or leg fracture?

Speak to a healthcare professional about a suitable resting position.

3. Dealing with Pressure Injuries

What Should I Do if I Suspect That a Pressure Injury is Forming?

Seek help **early**. You should:

- Bring your loved one to the nearest general practitioner or polyclinic
- Contact a home medical team for a consultation if transporting them is difficult

In the meantime, **reduce prolonged pressure** on the affected area.

Tips to Manage Ongoing Pressure Injuries

The management of each pressure injury depends on its severity and any other medical conditions your loved ones may have.

As a general guide:

- Relieve pressure on the affected area
- Ensure that the wound is dressed and protected appropriately
- Speak to a nurse about how to care for the site of injury

Clinic B1C

TTSH Medical Centre, Level B1

Contact:

6357 7000 (Central Hotline)



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