

Keeping your skin healthy when you are in hospital

Preventing Pressure Ulcers (Bed Sores)

Information for children,
young people, parents
and carers



Leeds children's
hospital

caring about children



Surface

Skin Inspection

Keep Moving

Incontinence

Nutrition & Hydration

What is a pressure ulcer?

Pressure ulcers, also called bed sores, are parts of your skin that become damaged and sore. They happen when you are sitting or lying in one position for too long.

They can also be caused by: shoes that don't fit properly; sliding down the bed; wheelchairs and arm chairs that don't fit you and not being able to keep your skin clean and dry.

Who may get pressure ulcers?

Some people are always at risk of pressure ulcers. Everyone is at some risk in hospital because you don't move around as much as usual. This may be because you are tired, are having a lot of medicines or if you are in pain.

However you are more at risk if you are:

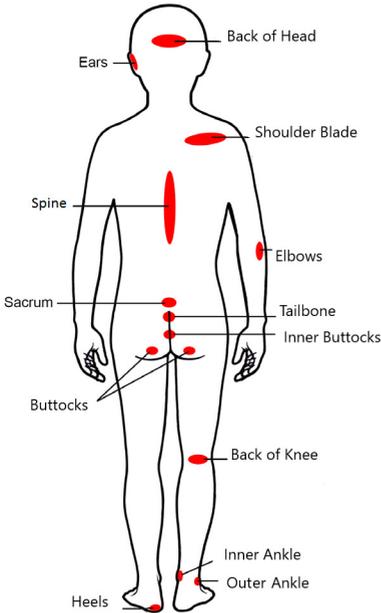
- having strong pain killers such as morphine;
- not eating and drinking enough;
- overweight or underweight;
- lying in bed a lot, or
- your skin may be - dry, moist, paper thin, red, sore or swollen.

Checking your skin - get to know your pressure areas

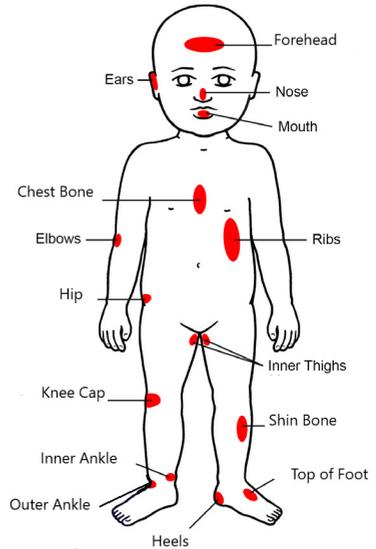
The red dots are parts of the body where pressure ulcers are most likely to happen. These may start off as red marks.



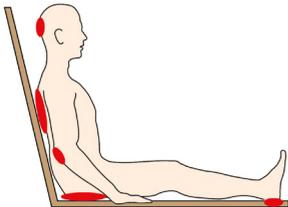
Common Areas for Pressure Ulcer Formation (not an exhaustive list)



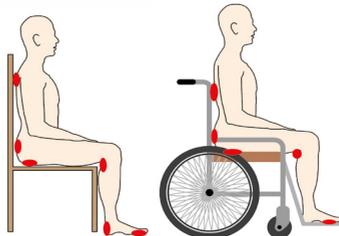
Common Areas for Pressure Ulcer Formation (not an exhaustive list)



Sitting up in bed



Sitting in a chair or wheelchair



Surface

When I am poorly I use a special mattress to stop me getting sores.



We can help by giving you special pressure relieving equipment that may help if you are at risk.

Pressure relieving equipment, such as a mattress or chair cushion, may be given to you to help the areas of your body that are sore. Please tell the nursing staff if the equipment you have been given is not working or is uncomfortable. Also let staff know if you normally use a special cushion or mattress at home.

Pressure ulcers can also happen under medical devices we use to treat you or your child's condition. For example oxygen masks, tubing, urinary catheters, casts or neck collars. It is important that you tell the nursing staff if you have a poorly fitting or painful medical device.





Keep moving

It might be that you are more at risk of a pressure ulcer because you are not able to move around as much as usual.

Moving around regularly is very important to help prevent a pressure ulcer. You can keep moving even if you are sitting or lying in bed or in a chair.



Moving side to side and lifting your bottom helps make the pressure easier for a short time.



Sitting properly helps to spread your weight so there is less pressure on bony areas. Lift your bottom regularly if you are able and safe to do this to make the pressure easier.



Use your call bell to ask the nurse if you need help with this.

(Images used with kind permission of Catherine Cross - Physiotherapist.)

Incontinence (not being able to use the toilet in time)

If your skin gets wet and damp it can be more prone to damage, for example your wee, poo or if you get sweaty. If your skin is wet or damp it can get sore if it rubs on sheets. If you are sitting still for a long time on damp skin the pressure can make it sore.

We will keep your skin clean, dry and moisturised. Staff will check your skin every day. It is good to keep yourself clean, however soap is very drying please ask the nurses for help and advice.

A foam cleanser can help to keep skin clean and a barrier product protects your skin. Make sure your skin is patted dry not rubbed after washing and use moisturisers where appropriate. You can speak to your nurse for more information about these products.

I'm glad I told the nurses that my bottom was sore, because we caught the ulcer early.



Well done!

Eating and drinking



If you are not able to eat and drink as much as you do usually, your skin may not be as healthy as normal. If your skin is not healthy it can get sore more easily.

You should be drinking plenty of fluids (unless we have told you not to) to help keep your skin healthy. This can be water, juice, squash or milky drinks.

Losing weight because you are not eating properly can make it easier for your skin to become sore. If you are overweight or underweight it can also cause problems for your skin.

The staff will check how much you weigh when you first come into hospital and every week. If they have any worries or if you already have a pressure ulcer, we may ask a dietitian (someone who is a food expert) to come to see you. They will give you help and advice about the food you eat.

Remember, it's important to look after your skin by:

- Moving regularly.
- Eating and drinking well.
- Telling staff if you have any pain or discomfort.

If you would like any more information or have any questions, please speak to a staff member on the ward or ask your mum, dad or carer to speak to them.



Staff are able to ask other members of the hospital team to see you. This may be the Tissue Viability Service, Physiotherapists, Dietitians, Occupational Therapists and Back Care Advisors. They are there if you need special help or if you are still feeling poorly.

When the nurse told me painkillers might stop me feeling pressure, I made sure I changed my position more often.

