



Pressure Ulcer Prevention

How can you prevent pressure sores?

There are many things you can do to help prevent pressure sores if you're at risk. It's also important to use these steps to help an existing sore to heal. If you can't do them yourself, ask a family member or friend for help.

Change position often

- In a bed, change position every 2 hours. Learn how to move yourself so that you avoid folding and twisting your skin.
- In a wheelchair or other type of chair, shift your weight every 15 minutes.
- Try not to slide or slump across sheets in a chair or bed. Recliner chairs are likely to allow slipping, so do not sleep in a recliner.

Take good care of your skin

- Keep your skin clean and free of sweat, urine, and feces. Wash with gentle soap and warm (not hot) water. Don't scrub the skin too hard.
- If you have problems with bowel or bladder control, clean the skin right away. Use a barrier cream or lotion to protect your skin from moisture.
- If you have dry skin, use moisturizing cream or lotion to keep your skin from drying out and cracking.
- Know what pressure sores look like, and check your skin every day. Pay special attention to bony areas, such as the hips, elbows, knees, and heels. Also check places where the skin folds over itself. Have someone else look at areas you can't see.



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Make healthy choices

- Eat healthy foods with enough protein, and get plenty of fluids. That can help damaged skin heal and help new skin grow.
- Stay at a healthy weight. Both weight gain and weight loss can make pressure sores more likely.
- Don't smoke. Smoking dries the skin and reduces its blood supply.

Talk to your doctor about pressure-relieving cushions and pads

- There are special pads to put on top of a mattress to help it fit your body's shape better. And there are cushions that can reduce pressure on certain areas of the body.
- Ask your doctor which cushions and pads might help you. Some products, such as doughnut-type devices, may actually cause pressure sores or make them worse.