

# What we can all do to prevent a pressure injury?

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- Get up and move as often as possible. If you need help, please ask.
- If you are not able to leave your bed, change positions and turn often to prevent constant pressure on any part of the body.
- Use pillows or foam wedges to reduce pressure over bony areas.
- Check skin for redness or changes after sitting or lying in a chair or bed.
- Keep bed sheets and clothing free of wrinkles and food crumbs.
- Eat a healthy diet with enough protein (protein helps the body heal).
- Wash with warm water not hot when washing.
- Use skin lotions and or barrier creams to keep skin from drying out and cracking.

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*Content is adapted from Healthwise, Inc. and is not intended to replace the advice or care you get from your doctor or other health care professionals. Always consult your health professional for medical diagnosis and treatment.*

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## Health Information

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### How to Prevent and Recognize Pressure Injuries

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## What is a pressure injury?

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A pressure injury (sometimes called a bed sore or pressure ulcer) is an injury to the skin and/or the tissues under the skin.

Constant pressure on an area of skin reduces blood supply to the area. Over time, it can cause the skin to break down and form an open sore.

Pressure injuries most often form on the skin over bony areas, where there is little cushion between the bone and the skin.



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## What causes a pressure injury?

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Constant pressure on the skin and tissues can cause a pressure injury.

Examples include:

- Sliding down in a bed or chair, being pulled across bed sheets or other surfaces,
- Lying in one position for long periods of time,
- Pressure from tubing (oxygen, IV) and medical devices (splints) on the skin.

Older people are at greater risk for pressure injuries because their skin is thinner, drier and less elastic, so it's easier to damage.

Poor nutrition - common among older people and those who can't move around easily - makes skin less healthy and easier to damage.

Skin that is irritated from sweat or contact with urine and stool is at greater risk for pressure injuries too.

## What can families and caregivers to do help?

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- Encourage your loved one to eat and drink.
- Remind to shift position while in a wheel chair.
- Avoid laying with the head of bed elevated for long periods.
- Purchase well-fitting shoes and breathable clothing.
- Avoid leaving objects in bed, like TV remotes and books .

## Additional Tips

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- Avoid the use of restraints.
- Minimize the layers of fabric on the beds.
- Communicate with the team if you see any changes .