



Prevention of Pressure Injuries

What is a Pressure Injury?

- A pressure injury (pressure ulcer, pressure sores, decubitus ulcer or bedsore) is a localized damage to the skin and underlying soft tissue, usually over a bony prominence or resulting from a medical or other device¹.
- The injury can present as intact skin or an open ulcer¹.
- The most common locations for pressure injuries to develop is the back of your head, shoulders, elbows, hips, tailbone, knees, and heels¹ (Figure 1).
- These injuries occur as a result of prolonged, intense pressure and/or pressure in combination with friction and shear^{1,2} (Figure 2).

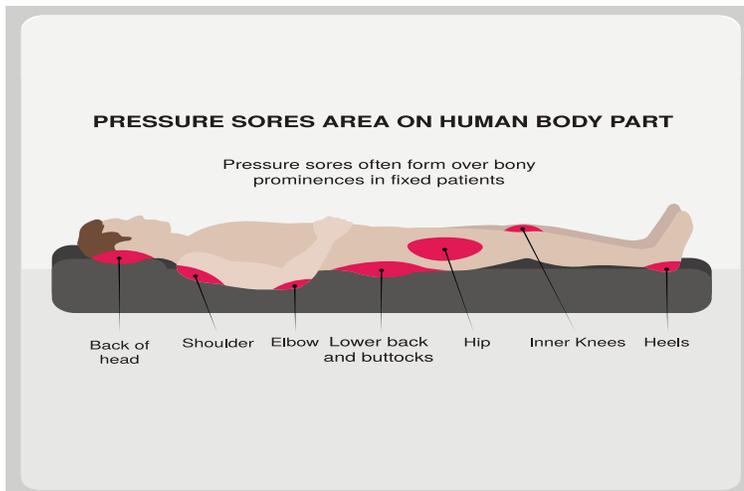


Figure 1: Pressure Points

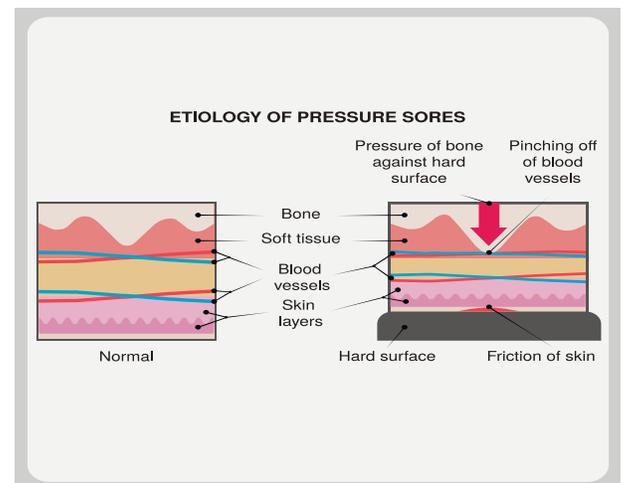


Figure 2: Illustration of the etiology of pressure injury

Risk Factors

Risk factors for developing a pressure injury include: ^{2, 3}

- ✓ Limited mobility due to poor health or weakness, paralysis, injury/illness that requires bedrest or chair confinement, or recovery from a surgery
- ✓ Friction, shear and increased pressure to areas of bony prominences
- ✓ Increased skin moisture related to urinary or fecal incontinence
- ✓ Poor nutrition and/or dehydration
- ✓ Altered/decreased mental awareness or cognition
- ✓ Severe, chronic or terminal illness
- ✓ Increased age



Prevention of Pressure Injuries

Reduce Your Risks

There are a few strategies you can use to help prevent the development of a pressure injuries:^{3,4}

1. Skin care and moisture balance of skin
 - a. Moisturize your skin after a bath or shower; cleaned and hydrated skin is essential
 - b. Check your body or have someone doing that for you once daily for any signs of redness or open areas/wounds
 - c. Wash your skin with warm water and gentle cleansers to promote skin hydration and cleanliness
 - d. Avoid scrubbing or vigorous massaging over bony areas (i.e., heels, hips)
 - e. Cleanse skin thoroughly once in contact with urine and/or stool
 - f. Clean briefs/disposable underwear may be needed to help keep moisture away from your skin
 - g. Your healthcare provider may suggest using a protective cream to prevent urine and/or stool from causing skin irritation and breakdown
2. Management/reduction of pressure, friction and shear
 - a. Adjust your weight as frequently as possible; every 15 minutes while seated and every 2 hours while lying on bed
 - b. Use pillows as wedges to take weight/pressure off of bony areas (i.e., heels, tailbone, etc.)
 - c. Do not slide down or across the bed; this increases friction/shearing²
 - d. While in bed, keep the head of the bed as low as possible (equal to or less than 30 degrees)
 - e. Your healthcare professional may prescribe you as special mattress/pad to help relieve pressure
3. Nutrition
 - a. Eat a balanced diet; your doctor may recommend a diet or refer you to a dietician²
 - b. Drink plenty of water to stay hydrated www.food-guide.canada.ca 



Prevention of Pressure Injuries

Signs of a Pressure Injury

Early signs and symptoms of a pressure injury include:^{1,3}

- ✓ Pain and/or itchiness at the suspected site
- ✓ Part of your skin becoming discoloured; red, purple or blue patches over the suspected area
- ✓ Discoloured skin patches not turning white when pressed on
- ✓ Part of your skin feels warm, spongy or hard

Later signs and symptoms of a pressure injury include:^{1,3}

- ✓ A redness (stage 1), blister or open wound (stages 2)
- ✓ A wound that reaches deep layers of your skin (stages 3)
- ✓ A wound that affects deep layers of your skin and also reaches muscle, tendon and/or bone (stages 4)



NPIAP.com | Copyright © 2011 Gordian Medical, Inc. dba American Medical Technologies

Figure 3: Stage 1 Pressure Injury

Used with permission from National Pressure Injury Advisory Panel



Figure 4: Stages of Pressure injury
Courtesy from Dr. MH Caliri

When to Contact a Health Care Professional

Talk with your healthcare provider as soon as you notice any signs of a pressure injury as it will prevent it from getting worse.

Seek medical attention immediately if:⁴

- ✓ Your skin is red and swollen
- ✓ You notice pus coming from the wound
- ✓ You have severe pain in the injured area
- ✓ You feel unwell (i.e., cool, clammy skin, fast heartbeat)
- ✓ You have a high temperature (i.e., 38°C or 100.4°F)

These symptoms could be signs of a severe infection that needs to be treated by a wound care specialist as soon as possible.

Contact **Advanced** to learn more!

(807)700-1514

info@advancedwoundcare.ca

References

1. National Pressure Injury Advisory Panel. (2020). *Pressure Ulcers prevention*. Retrieved December 2, 2020, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LYwFb3Dgcjk&feature=youtu.be>
2. Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario. (2005). *Risk Assessment & Prevention of Pressure Ulcers*. Retrieved November 27, 2020, from https://rnao.ca/sites/rnao-ca/files/Risk_Assessment_and_Prevention_of_Pressure_Ulcers.pdf
3. Norton, L., Parslow, N., Johnston, D., Ho, C., Afalavi, A., Mark, M., ... Moffatt, C. (2018). *Best Practice Recommendations for the Prevention and Management of Pressure Injuries*. Wounds Canada: Toronto. Retrieved November 27, 2020, from <https://www.woundscanada.ca/docman/public/health-care-professional/bpr-workshop/172-bpr-prevention-and-management-of-pressure-injuries-2/file>
4. European Pressure Ulcer Advisory Panel, National Pressure Injury Advisory Panel, & Pan Pacific Pressure Injury Alliance. (2019). *Prevention and Treatment of Pressure Ulcers/Injuries*. Retrieved November 27, 2020, from http://www.internationalguideline.com/static/pdfs/Quick_Reference_Guide-10Mar2019.pdf