Factors that Can Increase the Risk of Pressure Ulcers

- Advanced age
- Impaired nutritional status (including not eating or drinking enough)
- Decreased ability or inability to move independently
- Loss of ability to change and control body position
- Moisture, including loss of bowel or bladder control
- Confusion or a change in mental status
- Certain medications and use of various medical devices
- Decreased sensation or ability to feel
- Certain illnesses such as diabetes and circulatory diseases
- A previous pressure ulcer
- Obesity

References:
What is a Pressure Ulcer?

A pressure ulcer, sometimes called a “bedsore” or “decubitus ulcer,” is an injury to the skin and underlying tissue caused by unrelieved pressure or pressure in combination with shearing (often from sliding down in bed). These ulcers usually occur on the buttocks, hips, heels, elbows and shoulders. These body parts are under the most pressure when you are lying in bed or sitting for long periods of time.

Can Complications Develop from Pressure Ulcers?

Yes. Pressure ulcers can cause pain, increase the risk for infection, and may slow recovery from another illness or surgical procedure.

Can Pressure Ulcers be Prevented?

While not all pressure ulcers can be prevented, many can. By assessing what puts you at risk for pressure ulcers, your care team is able to determine the best possible prevention plan for you!

Skin Care is Important!

Check the skin daily. Look for:

- Redness or any color changes
- Changes in temperature
- Broken skin
- Pain
- Drainage
- Discomfort or itching
- Swelling
- Odor

Prevention

- Keep skin clean and well-lubricated; manage excessive moisture.
- Use a mild cleanser for bathing and pat skin dry.
- Bath water should be warm but not hot.
- Do not massage (rub) bony areas (such as the hips and elbows.)

- Ensure adequate nutrition.
- Fluids, protein and calories are important for maintaining healthy skin.
- Ask a health care provider to help determine the right diet for you.

- Change positions.
- In bed: every two hours.
- In a chair: at least every hour.
- If able to move independently:
  - Shift position every 15 minutes while sitting.

Ask a health care provider about devices to help increase mobility and decrease pressure. Chair cushions that are shaped like donuts should never be used.

Report any skin changes to your health care provider.