

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



www.goldstamp.org

The **Gold STAMP** program to reduce pressure ulcers in New York State is a coalition of organizations convened to provide resources and education across the continuum of care to improve the assessment, management, and prevention of pressure ulcers.



SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY State University of New York

References:

European Pressure Ulcer Advisory Panel and National Pressure Ulcer Advisory Panel. (2009). *Prevention and treatment of pressure ulcers: quick reference guide*. Washington DC: National Pressure Ulcer Advisory Panel.

New Jersey Hospital Association. (n.d.). *Help us protect your skin*. Retrieved January 7, 2014 via <http://www.njha.com/media/43477/puconsumereng.pdf>



Preventing Pressure Ulcers

Information for
Patients and Families

A Guide for Healthy Skin



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.

Report any skin changes to your health care provider.

Can Pressure Ulcers be Prevented?

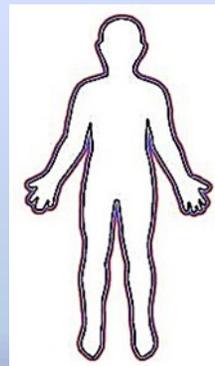
While not all pressure ulcers can be prevented, many can. By assessing what puts you at risk for pressure ulcers, your care team is able to determine the best possible prevention plan for you!

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.