

Key Points for Pressure Injury Prevention

- Reposition every 15 minutes when seated and at least every two hours when lying down.
- Maintain a healthy diet and hydrate as recommended by your HCP.
- Protect your skin by bathing regularly and applying barrier cream as needed.
- Do daily skin checks paying special attention to the pressure points noted in this brochure. Use a mirror for hard-to-see areas or ask for assistance if unable to do a self-check. Bathing is a great time to do your daily skin inspections.
- Be active in your care. Notify your HCP about changes to your skin over pressure points (changes in color/ texture, temperature or pain) and ask for treatment. Ask them to look at your skin.
- Consult with your HCP for other ways to prevent pressure injuries.



Our Services:

Our goal is to support your life's journey. We are here to help guide you to fulfilling your goals.

Contact for more information:

Nursingservices@dshs.wa.gov

<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/altsa-homeand-communityservices/nursing-services>

DDANursingServices@dshs.wa.gov

<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/dda/nursing-services>

Area Agencies on Aging
Contact your local AAA office:

<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/AL TSA/resources>

The information and graphics contained in this pamphlet are intended for general informational and educational purposes only and are not intended as a substitute for health care advice applicable to any specific individual's condition or for obtaining health care advice from qualified professional. If you have specific questions, concerns or need health care advice about pressure injuries or pressure injury prevention you should contact an appropriate qualified professional.

Preventing Pressure Injuries

A Patient Guide to Prevention



DSHS Aging and Long-Term Support Administration
DSHS Developmental Disabilities Administration

What is a pressure injury and how does it occur?

A pressure injury is damage to the skin and underlying tissue caused by pressure over a bony area. Pressure injuries can develop if you don't move for long periods of time. The pressure can come from lying in bed, sitting in a chair or wheelchair. Pressure can also be caused by medical devices such as oxygen tubing, urinary catheters or splints/braces. You are at higher risk for pressure injuries if you are immobile, incontinent, have diabetes, circulation problems or have poor nutrition. Other names for pressure injuries: bedsores, pressure sores, pressure ulcers or decubitus ulcers.

Hydration



Getting enough fluids daily is important for maintaining healthy skin. Fluids ensure that the nutrients from the food you eat get to your skin cells. Avoid drinking caffeinated and alcoholic beverages, as these can dehydrate you. Examples of appropriate fluids include water (including sparkling water), milk, herbal tea, low sodium soup/broth, juice and Jello.

- Check with your health care provider for your individual daily fluid requirement. You will need extra fluids to replace fluids lost with vomiting, diarrhea, excessive sweating or if you have a heavily draining wound.
- Monitor for early signs of dehydration: Thirst, dry mouth, decreased urine output or dark-colored urine. Notify your health care provider if dehydration doesn't improve with increased fluid intake.

Nutrition

Eating a well-balanced diet that includes fruits/vegetables, protein and healthy carbohydrates is important to maintain healthy skin and to help heal pressure injuries should they occur.

- When you are underweight, you have less natural padding to protect your bony areas, so your skin can breakdown from even small amounts of pressure. When you are overweight, it is harder to shift your weight to relieve pressure. Also, the excess tissue uses oxygen and nutrients that could otherwise be nourishing your skin.
- You may benefit from eating smaller, more frequent meals.
- Consider your portion sizes.
- Avoid high sugar foods (candy, pastries, soda/pop, ice cream, etc.).
- Avoid crash diets.

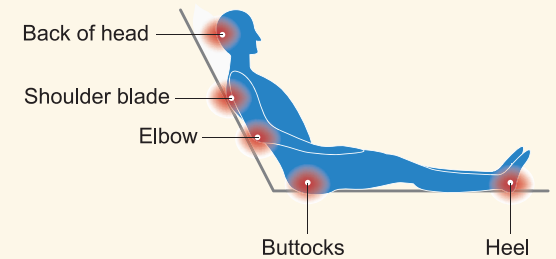
If you have conditions that may be affected by nutrition (such as diabetes, hypertension or heart failure), consult your health care provider (HCP). If your appetite is poor, consult with your health care provider about a possible nutritional consult and nutritional supplements.

Skin Care

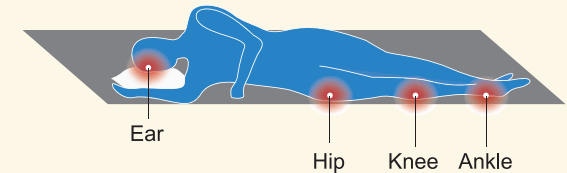
- Clean skin immediately after becoming soiled.
- Use mild soap and a soft cloth. Rinse and dry skin thoroughly after cleansing. Apply fragrance-free moisturizer as needed.
- Change pads or briefs when soiled.
- Use cloth bed pads rather than disposable bed pads that trap moisture close to the skin.

Positioning

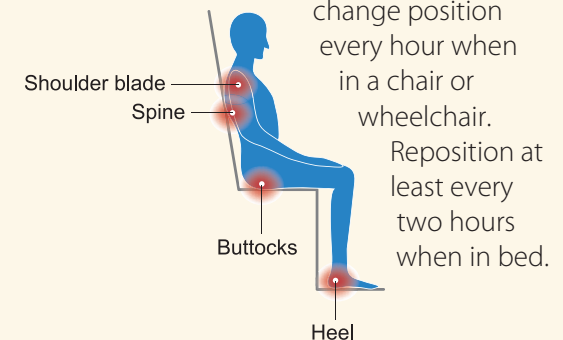
- Keep head of the bed no more than 30 degrees.
- Position to avoid pressure directly on your hipbone when on side. Place pillows behind back for support. Put pillows or wedges in between legs and under heels to keep knees and ankles from touching and heels off the bed.



- Keep linens and clothing free from wrinkles.
- Inspect pressure-relieving devices for damage.
- Avoid using donut cushions for pressure relief.



- Take care to lift and not drag your body across a surface.
- Shift weight at least every 15 minutes and change position every hour when in a chair or wheelchair.



Reposition at least every two hours when in bed.