



Where can I find more information about pressure ulcers?

Healthcare workers have formed special groups that work together to better understand pressure ulcers. There is a special group called the National Pressure Ulcer Advisory Panel (NPUAP) that provides advice for health workers and the public on pressure ulcers. You can find more information at

www.npuap.org



How can
you help
STOP
pressure
ulcers?

www.npuap.org

When you sit in a chair or lie in bed and don't move you may have noticed that your skin feels uncomfortable or even painful. When this happens, you change your position to stop that uncomfortable feeling.

Many people are unable to take this simple step of changing position. They may be ill, be calmed (with medicine) during a surgical operation or unable to notice the uncomfortable skin feeling. Skin is fed by our blood supply. If we stay in one position too long without moving, blood can no longer get to the skin at the parts of our body where we sit or lie down. When this happens the skin can die and a wound in the skin happens. These wounds were once called bed sores (from not moving enough in bed) or decubitus ulcers. Today health workers call these injuries pressure ulcers. Ulcer is the word for an open sore on the skin that may be close to the skin surface or deep down to the bone. Sadly pressure ulcers are very common and many people may know of a family member or friend who has had a pressure ulcer.

Am I likely to get a pressure ulcer?

You can avoid getting a pressure ulcer by often changing your position when you sit in a chair or lie in bed. Anything that stops you from making these small

movements may make you at risk for a pressure ulcer.

Think about pressure ulcers when -

- You are ill and have to stay in bed or a chair either at home or in a hospital.
- You cannot move because of your illness.
- You cannot move because of your medical condition.
- You cannot move because it is too painful.
- You are going to have long surgery that may take longer than three hours.

If these events happen to you talk to your doctor or nurse about what they will do to stop a pressure ulcer from developing.

Some people have to live with the risk of pressure ulcers occurring. These are people that use a wheelchair to get around or have a medical condition that keeps them in bed. In these cases, health workers will give advice and assistance to help the person. The health workers may give advice to the person's family and friends, to help stop a pressure ulcer from occurring.

How do you stop pressure ulcers?

If you are at risk to develop a pressure ulcer, then your doctor or nurse will help you to take steps to stop the pressure ulcer from happening. They may help you change your position at regular periods of time. They may provide special beds and cushions that help to protect your skin. They may look at other factors that may weaken your skin.

These factors can include:

- Attention to your eating habits
- Management of your sweating
- Management of your bladder or bowels
- Management of your skin cleansing and care

What if I have a pressure ulcer?

Sometimes it is not possible to prevent a pressure ulcer from developing. Your doctor or nurse will use actions to help the ulcer to heal such as special cover dressings. It is important that the steps taken to try and stop pressure ulcers from developing continue to be used during the treatment of your pressure ulcer. Ask your doctor or nurse how they are going to treat your pressure ulcer.