

## **Keeping your skin healthy and free of pressure injuries**

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Unrelieved pressure causes skin and tissue damage and can lead to a wound. The wound is called a pressure injury, a pressure ulcer or a bedsore.

When you are sick and in the hospital you may not be moving around as much, which puts your skin at risk for a pressure injury.

A pressure injury can:

- develop around bony areas such as buttocks, hips and heels.
- develop in a few hours, yet take months to heal.
- appear as a very small area on the skin, but the size of the area on the skin may not show the damage under the skin.
- restrict your daily activities which can slow down your recovery.
- cause infection and illness.

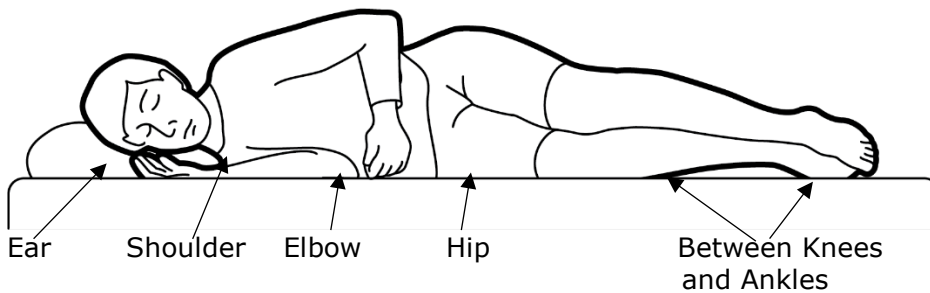
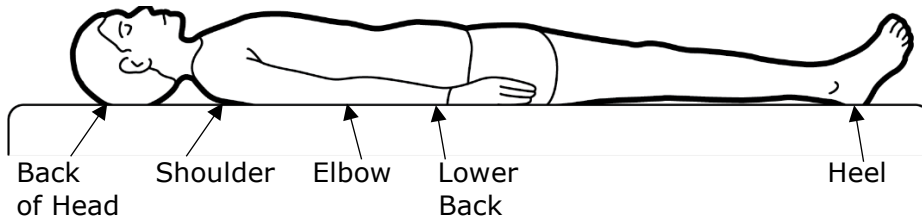
How does a pressure injury occur?

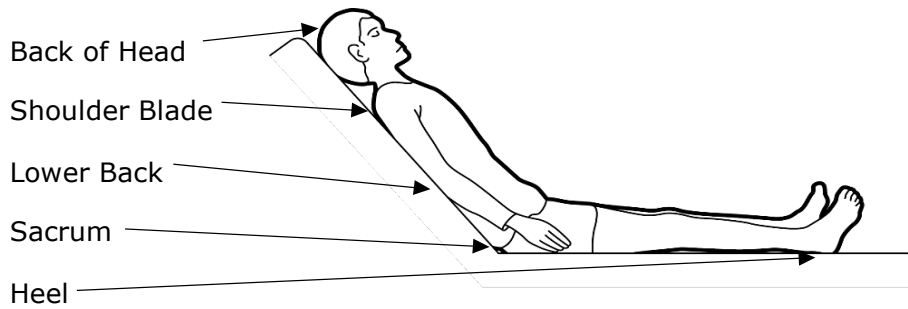
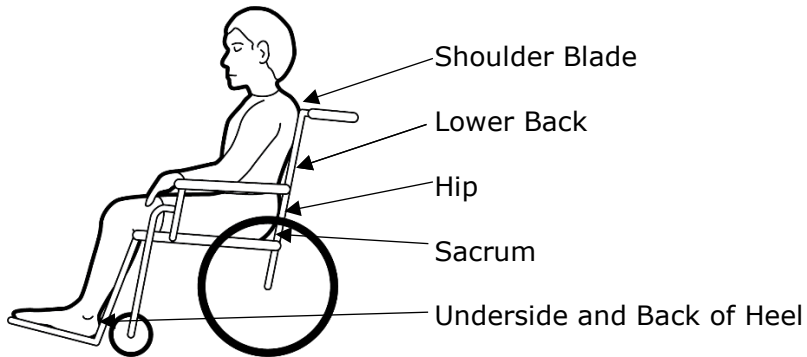
- If an area of skin is under pressure from being in the same position for a long period of time.
- If friction occurs by moving across the bed using heels or elbows.
- If there is a lot of moisture, for example – urine, sweat for a long period of time.

This is why your health care team wants to prevent pressure injuries from happening.

Your health care team wants to help you keep your skin healthy and will be watching your skin for damage. Please tell us if you notice anything at all about your skin that needs attention.

Here are common areas on the body where skin can breakdown:





**To prevent pressure injuries, please follow the 6 steps to healthy skin on the next page.** 



### **Step 1: Check your skin every day**

- Let the staff know if you have any areas of tenderness, redness, blistering or bruising especially over bony areas.
- Watch for numbing or tingling in spots where you support your body such as forearms, shoulders and buttocks.
- Avoid massaging your skin over bony parts of the body.
- Report anything that is causing discomfort such as stockings or bandages.
- Look for darker areas of the skin that may feel hard or warm.



### **Step 2: Control your pain**

- Take pain medication so you feel able to move around.



### **Step 3: Keep moving – Relieve pressure**

- Change your position as often as you can while lying and sitting. Even a slight change can help.
- Get up or move in bed carefully. Try not to slide across the sheets.
- Get out of bed as soon as you are able.
- If you cannot move yourself, your team will help you change positions.



### **Step 4: Eat well – Your skin needs healthy foods**

- Drink plenty of fluids as recommended by your doctor.
- Eat protein such as meats, legumes, seeds and dairy products.
- Ask to see a dietitian if you do not feel like eating or have special dietary needs.



### **Step 5: Stay clean and dry**

- Use gentle soap and water or the hospital's cleanser and moisturizer products to gently clean your skin.
- Apply moisturizing lotion to dry skin to prevent cracking.
- Let staff know if your clothes or bedding are wet or damp.

### **Step 6: Know about special equipment**

- Special equipment such as air mattresses, cushions or pillows may be used to help relieve any pressure areas.