



Pressure injuries

Information for people living in or visiting the residential aged care facility

A pressure injury is an area of damage to your skin and the area under your skin. This happens from constant pressure – for example if you sit or lie in the same spot, damage can happen in as quickly as one to two hours.

It can also happen through friction or shear – for example sliding down in your bed or chair or constant rubbing by tight shoes.

Pressure injuries occur most often over bony parts of the body like the heels, toes or tailbone (sacrum).

Pressure injuries are also called bed sores, pressure sores and pressure ulcers.

Although pressure injuries can have a big impact on your health they can often be prevented and can be treated.

Ways to prevent pressure injuries

- Check your skin each day. Look for changes like redness, dark areas, swelling, blisters or sores – these are signs of a pressure injury. There may also be some pain. Let staff know straight away.
- Checking your skin is very important if you have trouble moving by yourself, if have lost your sense of feeling, or if you have been unwell.
- Change position when you are sitting in a chair or lying in bed. Even small moves help to stop damage to your skin.
- Use pillows and foam wedges so there is less pressure on bony areas. Don't use foam rings or fluid filled bags.
- Talk to staff about using a special pressure-reducing mattress.
- Don't rub or massage the skin over your bony areas (for example, hip bones).
- Avoid contact with hard surfaces, especially with your heels or tailbone (sacrum).

Looking after your skin

- Use a soap-free body wash or wipes with no added perfume. These are much better for your skin than soap and won't dry it out. You can buy these products at the supermarket or pharmacy.



- When you dry your skin, pat gently. Don't rub hard.
- Use moisturiser on your skin twice a day as dry skin is easy to damage.
- If you have trouble with continence (wetting or soiling your pants), use absorbent pads and barrier cream or wipes to help prevent skin damage.
- Eat healthy food (fruit and vegetables) and have plenty of drinks (unless you have a fluid limit).

Ways to manage pressure injuries

- Stay off the pressure injury. This will stop it from getting worse and help it to heal.
- Avoid rubbing or massage the damaged area.
- Wound dressings can enhance healing and may be required.

Working together

You, your family and friends are important members of the care team. You know what is normal for you.

Let staff know if you notice any changes to your skin. Don't wait to see if you get better – it is always best to get help early.

Working together with staff will help to keep you healthy and out of hospital.

Talk to staff and ask questions. They need your help to give you the best care.

Questions to ask staff

- Can you help me check my skin?
- Is there anything that can be used to stop pressure on my skin?



Want to know more?

Read about pressure sores and ulcers on the [Healthdirect Australia website](https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/pressure-sores-and-ulcers) <<https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/pressure-sores-and-ulcers>>.

Disclaimer: This health information is for general purposes only. Please consult with your doctor or other health professional to make sure this information is right for you.

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Available from the [Department of Health residential aged care information web page](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/residential-aged-care/participating-with-consumers)

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