

Carers Information Card - How to manage pressure areas and prevent ulcers.

A pressure ulcer is a sore, an area of skin that has been damaged due to unrelieved and prolonged pressure. They are often found on bony parts of the body.

When in bed:

1. If possible, it is best to be turned 2-3 hourly, tilted slightly to the side and supported with pillows.
2. Bend the knees a little with a pillow in between the knees and ankles.
3. Wear loose, long sleeved clothing as well as socks.
4. If sitting up in bed, only sit in this position for half an hour.

When sitting in a chair:

1. Sit up straight with the back well supported.
2. Support the feet so that the knees are level with the hips.
3. Lift the bottom (with help if needed) every 15 minutes for 15 seconds.
4. Push up off the chair using the armrests.
5. Avoid leaning to one side for any length of time.
6. Lie down to rest during the day – this will give your bottom a break from the pressure.

Look after the skin:

1. Try and keep your skin clean and dry at all times.
2. Check your skin daily, particularly if you have poor circulation.
3. Use a moisturising lotion to prevent the skin from drying out.
 Bathe or shower in warm water using a mild cleanser or soap.
4. Avoid massaging your skin over bony parts of the body.
5. Managing incontinence assists in reducing the risk of ulcers.
6. Good foot care is important:
 - * Keep toenails trimmed with no sharp edges.
 - * Only wear comfortable shoes / socks or stockings made of wool or cotton



If you have any concerns about pressure areas, report these. There are a range of pressure care products available to assist.

Ensure good nutrition:

1. Lean meats, poultry, eggs and dairy help you skin to heal.
2. Oily fish like tuna, sardines or salmon help fight infection.
3. Fruit, vegetables, wholegrain breads and cereals assist in wound healing.

Signs to look and feel for:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Red / purple / blue skin | <input type="radio"/> Tenderness |
| <input type="radio"/> Blisters or swelling | <input type="radio"/> Hard areas |
| <input type="radio"/> Dryness, dry patches or shiny areas | <input type="radio"/> Warm areas |
| <input type="radio"/> Cracks, calluses, wrinkles | <input type="radio"/> Swollen skin over bony points |

Please report any change in condition to your nurse, GP or OT.

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Purpose: To provide information that reinforces the education provided by nursing or support staff to assist carers in the prevention and management of pressure ulcers.

Note:

1. If you don't feel confident, have any difficulty assisting with this or have any concerns, please let nursing or support staff know.
2. Please report any change in condition to nursing or support staff

As things change during the last hours:

* Only turn your loved one if obviously uncomfortable. This can be seen in facial grimacing, frowning, tensing of muscles and agitation.

* If unsure at any stage, contact your community palliative care service or after hours number.

Further Information: Australian Wound Management Association at www.awma.com.au

Acknowledgements: Victorian Quality Council www.health.vic.gov.au
Occupational Therapy Department- Swan Hill District Health

Disclaimer: The Community Palliative Care Service and all persons involved in producing this information sheet will not be held responsible for any adverse event or loss from the implementation of all or part of this information. All reasonable efforts will be made to ensure that the item this information sheet pertains to is maintained to a high safety standard.

**Please return this card to the Community Palliative Care Service when no longer required.
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