

In chair or wheelchair:

- Keep patient upright with good posture in chair. Thighs should be horizontal with ankles in neutral position and with feet on foot rests.
- Change position in chair at least every hour. Caregiver should help if patient cannot move without help.
- **Do not** use doughnut-shaped or ring cushions. These cushions cause more pressure and reduce blood flow to tissues.

Treatment plan for existing pressure injury

Treatment depends on the stage of the pressure injury:

- Ask the primary care provider or wound nurse how to take care of the injury
- **Do not** sit or lie on injury
- Relieve pressure on injury by using pillow or cushion or by turning patient off the injury
- Make sure patient eats well with enough calories, protein, vitamins, and minerals. Check with the health care provider or dietician about proper diet.
- Check progress of injury with each dressing change

VA

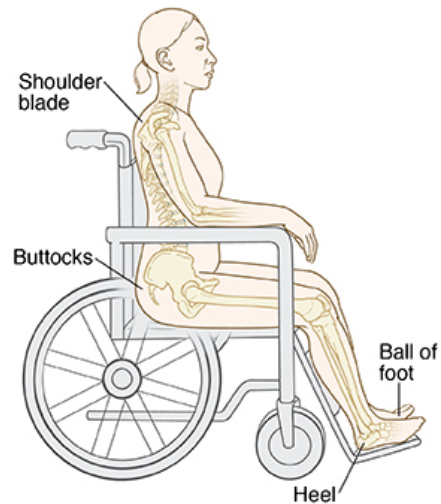


U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

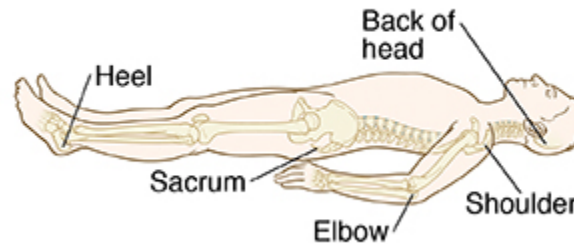
Veterans Health Administration
Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System

Pressure points to avoid

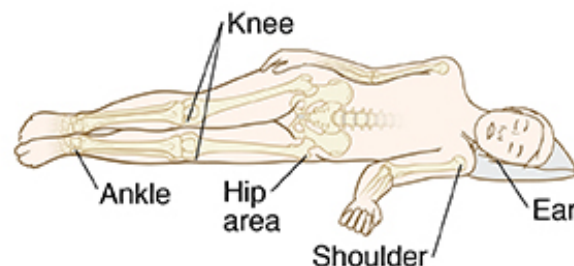
Sitting



On the back



On the side



MMS, 19-496, 4/2019AC



Patient and caregiver guidelines for preventing and treating pressure injuries

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What are pressure injuries?

Pressure injuries are damaged tissues of a part of the body.

Pressure injuries usually happen on the spine, tailbone, hips, heels, and elbows. They occur when a bony part of the body meets with a hard surface. A pressure injury forms when the soft body tissue in the middle is pushed between these two hard places for a long time. Pressure injuries are also called:

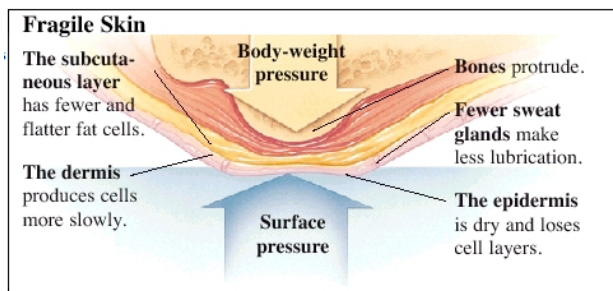
- Bedsores
- Decubitus ulcers
- Pressure sores

The four stages of pressure injuries

1. A pressure injury begins with a red area of the skin. This stage is easy to treat.
2. The second stage is an abrasion, blister, or shallow crater of the skin. This damage can be treated.
3. The third stage is a deep crater injury. This is serious.
4. The fourth stage can involve muscle, bones, and joints. This stage can lead to death.

Most pressure injuries can be prevented.

Some people will get pressure injuries because they have so many other health problems. Most pressure injuries happen to people over the age of 70. These people are usually confined to a bed, chair, or wheelchair.



Other pressure injury high-risk people:

- Are thin or obese
- Have a chronic illness such as diabetes, cancer, congestive heart failure, or circulation problems
- Are incontinent, sweat a lot, or have some type of drainage
- Have a broken bone
- Have a neurological condition
- Are paralyzed

Help prevent pressure injuries by:

- Eating a healthy diet
- Checking skin daily
- Using heel pads
- Turning bedbound patients at least every two hours
- Keeping skin moist and clean
- Using a foam or air pad on the bed
- Repositioning wheelchair patients every 15 minutes
- Telling the health care provider if skin becomes red or broken

Good body position

In bed:

- Change position every two hours
- **Do not** lie directly on hip bones
- Place a pillow under calves to keep heels off bed when lying on back
- Place small pillows or foam pads between knees and ankles to keep them from touching
- **Do not** raise head of bed greater than 30 degrees
- Raise head to upright position only when eating and for one hour after eating

