



Preventing Pressure Injuries

Parent/Caregiver Information

What is a pressure injury?

A pressure injury, (also known as a pressure sore or pressure ulcer) is an area of the skin that has been damaged due to unrelieved pressure, poor blood flow or chafing and rubbing of the skin. It may appear as a red area (or blue or purple in darker skin, that doesn't go white when pressed with a finger) or a break in the skin such as a blister, bruise, crack, graze or scrape. There may be more serious damage under the skin which is difficult to see. A pressure injury can be serious and may take a long time to heal.

All pressure injuries are preventable with careful management of your child skin, both in hospital and at home.

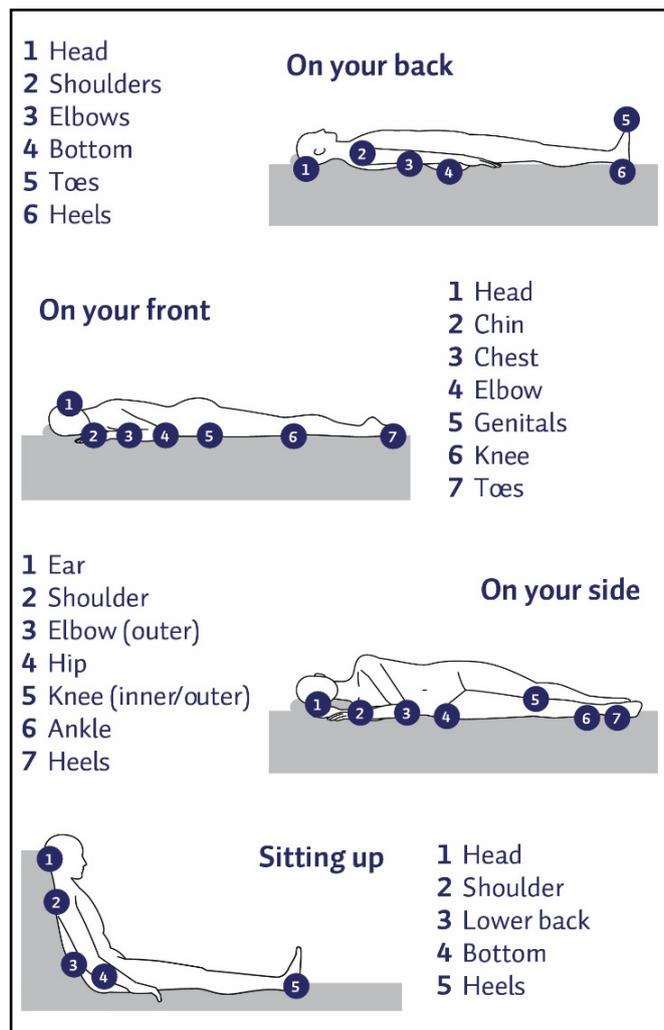
Where can pressure injuries be found on the body?

- Pressure injuries usually occur over bony areas, especially heels, buttocks and toes, but can also occur anywhere on the body where pressure is applied.
- Under plaster casts and splints or braces.
- Around medical equipment such as IV lines, tubes, monitoring equipment, catheters, masks, and drains, etc.

Who gets pressure injuries?

There is a risk of getting a pressure injury if your child:

- Has reduced activity
- Is unable to move themselves normally and particularly if they slide down the bed or chair
- Has reduced skin sensation (eg. numbness from nerve damage or an epidural)
- Has moist skin from loss of bowel and bladder control
- Has poor nutrition or fluid intake
- Is unwell, with a high temperature, a lot of sweating or having problems breathing
- Has pressure or friction to any area of the body
- Has medical equipment attached to them
- Has clothing, straps, seams or footwear that is tight or rubbing



Prevention in hospital

While in hospital nursing staff will assess and monitor your child on a daily basis. If your child is at risk of developing a pressure injury, staff will discuss a management plan with you. This might include positioning, helping your child to change position regularly, inspection of skin, regular repositioning of

medical equipment and referral to other members of the healthcare team. If your child requires special pressure relieving equipment either in hospital or at home this will be ordered. For example, a pressure relieving mattress.

What can you do?

Think **S.S.K.I.N**:

improve the **SURFACE** of the chair or bed, check their **SKIN, KEEP MOVING**,
avoid **INCONTINENCE** or moisture, improve **NUTRITION**

- **SURFACE:** prevent slipping down the bed or chair, use special pressure reducing surfaces in the bed or chair if they are provided.
- **SKIN:** check: your child's skin regularly, morning and night. Look for redness or darkening, blisters, bruising, cracks, scrapes or dry skin. Look for skin changes, skin may be a different colour, warmer, boggy, squishy or hard. Check skin folds, bony areas such as heels, ears, buttocks hips, etc., and under and around casts, splints braces and medical equipment, particularly if they are uncomfortable. To check your child's skin is healthy push the area of skin with your finger, when you take your finger away it should become white for a moment, then it should return to its normal colour. Please alert staff if you have any concerns.
- **KEEP MOVING:** change your child's position or encourage them to change it themselves at least every 2 hours during the day and every 3 hours overnight. Be careful not to drag the skin when moving, staff can assist and show you some moving techniques or equipment that can be used such as a sliding sheet or a hoist. Encourage your child to be as active and mobile as their condition will allow, please check with staff.
- **Avoid prolonged INCONTINENCE or moisture remaining on the skin:** urine and bowel problems can cause skin damage. Keep your child's skin clean and dry. Use pH neutral, un-perfumed and alcohol-free skin cleansers, moisturisers and wipes. Avoid massaging or rubbing the skin, especially over bony areas. Change nappies, clothes and bedding regularly, as soon as they are wet. If there is persistent moisture consider using a barrier cream to protect the skin and prevent skin breakdown. Please let staff know if you need assistance.
- **NUTRITION:** healthy food and plenty of fluids are important for healthy skin which helps stop pressure injuries. Please discuss with staff if you have concerns.

Careful attention to the condition of your child's skin, prompt attention to any signs of damage and maintaining a healthy diet is important for your child following discharge from hospital. The more normally active your child is, the lower the risk of pressure injury.

**Would you like to know more about pressure injury prevention?
Please ask your nurse or healthcare professional**

Based on the kids' info factsheet 'Pressure Injury Prevention' from The Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne, 2012 and the Pressure Injury Teaching Cards by The Canterbury Pressure Injury Prevention Advisory Group, 2020

For more information about:

hospital and specialist services, go to www.cdhb.health.nz | your health and medication, go to www.healthinfo.org.nz