

### What is a pressure injury?

A pressure injury is damage that occurs to the skin and underlying tissue caused by unrelieved pressure to an area of the body. This can happen from lying in bed, sitting in a wheelchair or chair for too long, the rubbing of the skin against the mattress or chair. The most common places for pressure injuries are where the bones are close to the skin e.g. heels, hip, elbow and bottom, or even your ears from oxygen tubing.

A pressure injury can also be called a pressure ulcer, pressure sore, or bedsore they can often develop quickly. This can happen to anyone and range from a minor wound (redness or a graze) to a deep wound which can be painful, become infected, leave scars and delay your recovery.

### How does a pressure injury happen?

The blood supply to the skin is damaged when a bony part of the body presses against a hard surface e.g. mattress, floor or chair. This can cause the skin to become either reddened or form a wound.

Reddening of the skin that disappears after pressure is removed is normal and not a pressure injury.

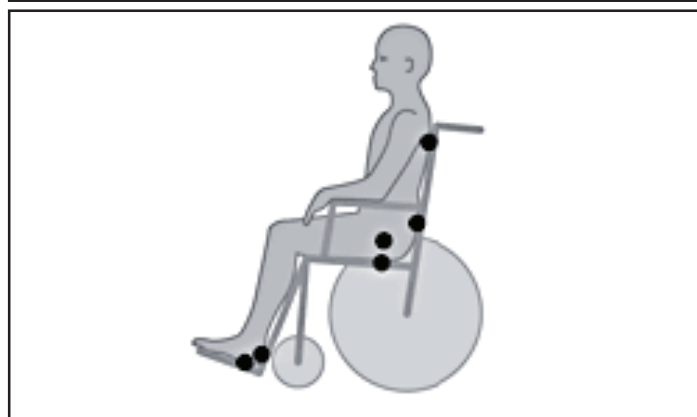
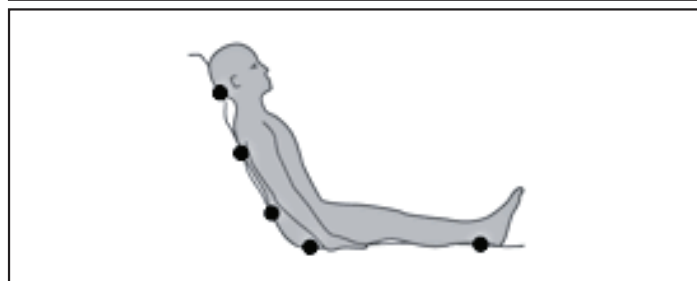
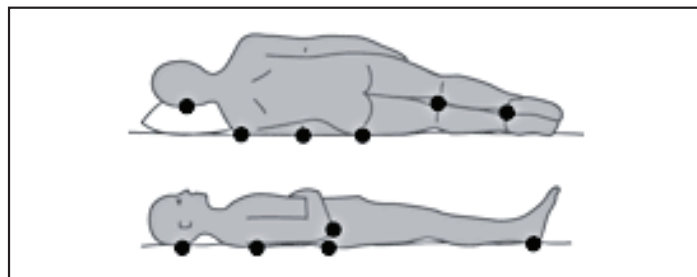
### Who is at risk?

Anyone of any age can get a pressure injury, but is more likely to happen if you:

- Are seriously ill or unconscious
- Have had major surgery
- Have problems changing position by yourself
- Have poor sensation e.g. if you have diabetes or spinal cord damage
- Have an epidural or local anaesthetic that affects sensation or movement
- Are very overweight or underweight
- Are not eating or drinking very well
- Have fragile or scarred skin
- Have previously had a pressure injury
- Have loss of bowel or bladder control

### Prevention is the key

#### Areas of the body at risk



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### How can you protect your skin from pressure injury?

- take good care of your skin
- check your skin everyday.

#### Tell a nurse or doctor if you notice changes such as:

- red patches on light skinned people that do not go away.
- bluish/purple or darker brown/black patches on dark skinned people that do not go away.
- swelling
- red and shiny skin, or hard cracked skin and/or any pain to your skin.

