



Pressure injuries

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Did you know you play an important role in preventing pressure injuries? A few simple gestures can make all the difference!

What is a pressure injury?

A pressure injury, also called a bedsore, results from intense and/or prolonged pressure combined with shear (dragging). The pressure is usually centered on areas where bones are close to the surface (bony prominences), such as the heels, buttocks, elbows and hips. It can also be caused by a medical instrument.

Constant pressure can compress the blood vessels, preventing nutrients and oxygen from circulating properly in the blood. This causes the tissues in the compressed area to be deprived of oxygen. Under these conditions, the risk of developing a pressure injury increases in just **2 to 6 hours**.

What are the risk factors?

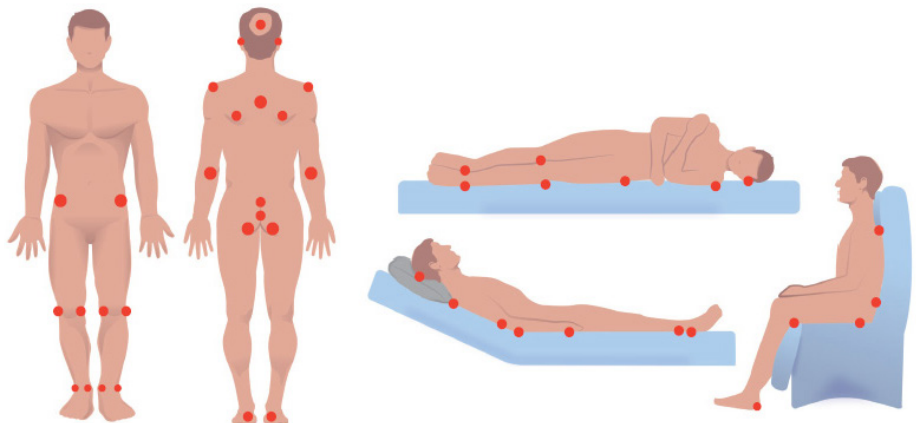
The main risk factors are age, the presence of other diseases, medication use, state of consciousness, decreased sensitivity, muscle spasms, malnutrition, dehydration, urinary or fecal incontinence, inactivity and pain, smoking, stress and obesity.



What are the possible complications?

Pressure injuries can:

- cause severe pain;
- prevent you from moving around normally;
- add to your time in hospital;
- lessen your quality of life;
- lead to a serious infection.



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What will the care team do?

- Assess your risk of developing pressure injuries;
- Closely monitor any pressure injuries that appear (colour change, redness);
- Reposition you in bed, place a pillow under or between your legs (on a fixed schedule);
- Provide a therapeutic pressure-relieving mattress or cushion for your bed, if needed;
- Have a nutritionist determine your dietary needs;
- Have an occupational therapist or physiotherapist speak to you about mobility aids.

How can I prevent pressure injuries?

Get moving

- Change positions in bed regularly (every 2 hours).
- Get up and walk around as often as possible.
- Stretch your arms and legs.
- Sit in the chair for meals.

Protect your skin

- Keep your skin hydrated by applying an unscented, alcohol-free moisturizer daily.
- Keep your skin clean and dry.
- Check the condition of your skin and heels.

Drink and eat enough

- Eat three balanced meals per day.
- Drink 6 to 8 glasses of water and other liquids per day (unless you have a daily limit).

Smoke less

- Smoking increases the risk of pressure injuries and slows the healing process.

References:

- Image of pressure injury taken from: www.nthssa.ca/sites/nthssa/files/resources/pressure_injury_final_eng_0.pdf
- Laferrière, S., Morin, J. et al. (2018). Aidez-moi, s'il-vous- plaie ! Cadre de référence en soins de plaies chroniques. Sherbrooke, CHUS.
- Prévenir les plaies de pression. (2021). Centre de littérature en santé du CHUM.
- Taken from: www.chumontreal.qc.ca/sites/default/files/2022-01/1015-1-preventing-pressure-ulcer.pdf