

Discharge Instructions for Pressure Injury



You have been diagnosed with a pressure injury. It is also called a bedsore or decubitus ulcer. This is a breakdown of skin and tissue. Pressure injuries may happen when you can't change position. They may happen when you must stay in a bed or a chair for a long time. Here's what you can do to prevent, watch for, and help heal these injuries.

Prevent pressure injuries

- Check your body daily for any signs of skin redness or open wounds.
- Turn or change your position at least every 2 hours. If you can't move yourself, ask someone to help you move.
- If you spend a lot of time in a chair, shift your body every 15 minutes. If you can't move yourself, have someone move you at least 1 time each hour.
- Ask about products that can help reduce pressure on your skin. These include some types of mattresses and foam or gel chair cushions.
- Ask about polyurethane preventive dressings. These can be put on high risk bony areas, such as over the large bone at the base of the spine (sacrum).
- Don't use doughnut-shaped cushions or any cushion that does not support you fully.
- Exercise your body to stay as flexible as possible. This also helps improve blood flow to all areas of your body. Tense and relax your muscles. Wiggle your fingers and toes. Rotate your wrists and ankles. Get help if you can't do this on your own.
- If needed, have a family member, friend, or caregiver bend and straighten your arms and legs every day. This is to keep you from getting stiff.
- Keep your skin clean and moisturized. Ask your healthcare provider what products to use that clean and protect the skin.
- Eat a healthy diet and drink plenty of water to stay hydrated. If your provider advises it, see a dietitian for help.

Watch for signs of pressure injuries

You are at greater risk for pressure injuries if you have any of these:

- Body areas with little or no feeling (sensation)
- Body areas that have constant pressure because of positioning or assistive devices
- A new or repeated injury to the skin

Keep watch for signs of that pressure injury may start, such as:

- A red or dark area of skin that does not get better in 30 minutes of easing pressure on that site
- Skin that cracks, blisters, peels, or has breaks in it
- Open sore that leaks fluid

Help yourself heal

- Keep pressure off the sore and the area around it. If the sore is on your back, try lying on your side or stomach. Pressure wounds do not heal unless the pressure is relieved. You must be careful to keep pressure off these areas at all times.
- Keep the sore clean and dry. Protect it from urine, stool, and any moisture.
- Don't massage the area around the pressure injury. This can cause more tissue damage.
- Don't massage any of the bony parts of your body. These are areas where the bone lies right under your skin and pushes against your skin.
- Don't touch or try to remove scabs without medical help.
- Talk to your provider about products that help pressure injuries heal. There are also products that protect the area from infection and protect the skin around the sore.

Follow-up care

Small, shallow sores may heal without any problems. More serious pressure injuries need close follow-up. They are more likely to get worse fast and get infected. Make a follow-up appointment as directed by your provider.

When to call your healthcare provider

Call your provider right away if you have any of these:

- Fever of 100.4° F (38°C) or higher, or as directed by your healthcare provider. If you have chills, take your temperature.
- Fluid, blood, or a smell from a sore
- Redness or swelling around a sore
- Dizzy or lightheaded feeling, or fainting
- You can see deeper tissues or bone in a sore

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