



Patient & Family Guide  
2022

# Pressure Injury (Ulcer) Prevention

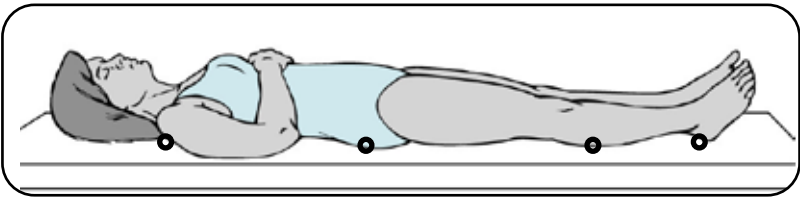
Aussi disponible en français : FF85-1795



[www.nshealth.ca](http://www.nshealth.ca)



- The skin is more likely to break open if:
  - › you slide down in a bed or chair.
  - › you rub the skin on a bed often.
  - › the skin is moist (wet).
- Pressure injuries can happen quickly (sometimes within hours) if the pressure, sliding, or moisture is not stopped.



- When you are admitted to the hospital, a member of your health care team will check your skin. This is to see if you are at risk of getting a pressure injury.

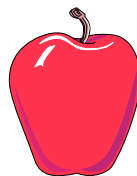
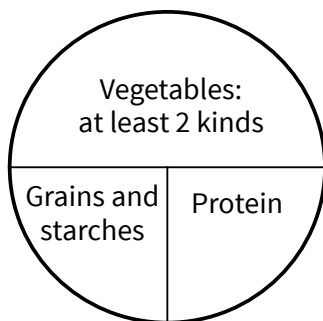
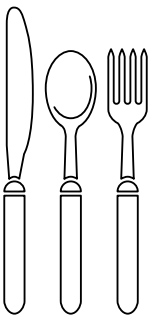
- **You are more at risk of getting a pressure injury if you:**
  - › cannot move or are not able to get out of bed.
  - › lay or sit in one position for long periods of time.
  - › have stool (poop) or urine (pee) touching your skin regularly.
  - › are not eating healthy foods.
  - › are not drinking enough fluids.
  - › are overweight or underweight.
  - › have dry skin.
  - › have poor circulation (blood flow).
  - › have little or no feeling (numbness) in your limbs (arms and legs) or other parts of your body because of injury, disease, or medication.
  - › have lowered mental alertness (you are not fully awake, aware, or able to respond normally to things around you) because of medication, surgery, or other factors.
  - › have high blood sugar or diabetes.

## How can my health care team help prevent pressure injuries?

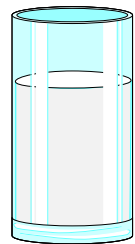
- We care about your safety. To help lower your risk of a pressure injury, we will:
  - › Assess your risk
  - › Check your skin often for red or broken areas
  - › Ask you to turn often, to make sure blood flow continues to all areas of your skin
  - › **Ask you to get out of bed to sit or walk, or change your position in bed as much as possible. This is very important in preventing injuries and helping your overall recovery.** We will help you move if you cannot do this by yourself.
- We may also:
  - › Place your legs on pillows or put on special “booties” that keep pressure off your heels
  - › Order a special mattress that lowers the pressure on your body
  - › Give you a special cushion to protect your skin while sitting
- You will be treated by team members with special knowledge about pressure injuries. This may include:
  - › Dietitians
  - › Occupational therapists
  - › Physiotherapists

# What can I do to help prevent pressure injuries?

- Ask a member of your health care team: “Am I at risk for getting a pressure injury?”
- Keep the head of your bed as low as you can when not eating. This keeps your bum from sliding down in the bed. Rubbing or sliding on the sheets can increase the risk of skin breaking down.
- Shift your weight often while sitting or lying in bed (every 15 minutes to an hour). Lean forward and from side to side while sitting. This can give you needed relief from the pressure.
- Use pillows to help protect bony areas from pressure.
- Eat as healthy as possible. Protein will help you heal faster. Make sure that eat plenty of protein, vitamins, and minerals. If you have questions about what you should eat, please ask to talk with a dietitian.



Fruit



Milk

- Drink 8 cups of fluid every day. This includes water, milk, and/or non-dairy drinks. Ask your dietitian if there is anything you should not drink.
- If you have a bowel or bladder (bathroom) accident, tell your nurse right away so moisture does not stay on your skin.

**It is very important to tell your nurse or another member of your health care team if you:**

- See redness on bony parts of your body
- Feel pain or tingling where there is pressure on your skin
- Are itchy or numb where there is pressure on your skin

