

## Prevention: Use the SSKIN Bundle

### ■ **SKIN INSPECTION: Check the skin for early warning signs**

Watch out for skin that is darker or redder than usual, hot and cold areas, pain and blisters especially on bony areas.

### ■ **SURFACE: Have the right support surface in place**

Use a specialist mattress or cushion to reduce pressure.

### ■ **KEEP MOVING:**

Change your position regularly to prevent buildup of pressure.

### ■ **INCONTINENCE: Keep skin clean and dry**

Wash the moist area with mild soap or soap substitute. Pat dry only and apply barrier cream on the affected areas.

### ■ **NUTRITION: Eat and drink well**

Drink 6 – 8 glasses of water a day. Maintain a balanced dietary intake and body weight.

**If you are unable to move, the staff in the ward will help you to change your position regularly**

## Contact Details:

### NRH Spinal Cord Injury Liaison Nurses

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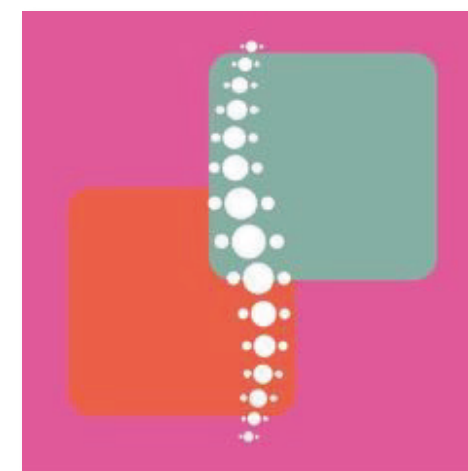


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An tOspidéal Náisiúnta Athshlánúcháin

## Preventing Pressure Injuries in the Spinal Cord Injury Population



**A Guide for Patients, Carers and  
Healthcare Professionals**

## What is a Pressure Injury?

**Localised** damage to skin, usually over **bony areas**, due to **pressure** and or **shear**.

### Pressure:

Unrelieved pressure from body weight against a hard surface reduces blood supply resulting in damage to the skin.

- ◇ **Example:** Prolonged sitting or lying in one position.

### Shear:

Shear occurs when skin is stretched.

- ◇ **Example:** Sliding down or dragging up and down across the bed or chair.

Frequent rubbing of skin over a surface can remove the top layers of the skin or cause blisters due to friction, for example, you can develop a blister on the heel if your heels rub on the mattress.

If pressure is unrelieved, skin damage can develop in **Less than 2 hours**.



## You are **at risk** if you have:

- ⇒ Problems with movement
- ⇒ Loss of sensation or poor sensation
- ⇒ Moist skin due to urine faeces and or excessive sweating
- ⇒ Poor circulation
- ⇒ Poor diet and fluid intake

Individuals at high risk of Pressure Injury are patients with spinal cord injuries, stroke, diabetes, and patients who are terminally ill or are confined to bed.

## Warning Signs

Check for the following, especially over bony areas:

- ◆ Red or purple discoloration of the skin
- ◆ Skin feeling too warm or cold
- ◆ Swelling and or pain and discomfort



**Note: It may not be possible to identify erythema (redness) in darkly pigmented skin**

**Check For:** Skin that is darker, harder or softer in relation to the surrounding skin, also hot and cold areas, pain and blisters.

## Common Pressure Injury Areas

**Base of the Spine**

**Buttocks**

**Heels**

**Ankles**

**Hips**

**Less common areas: Back of head, Backbones, Shoulder-blades, Elbows and Ears.**

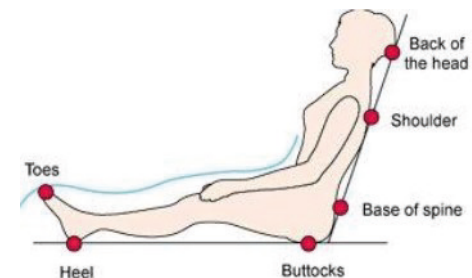
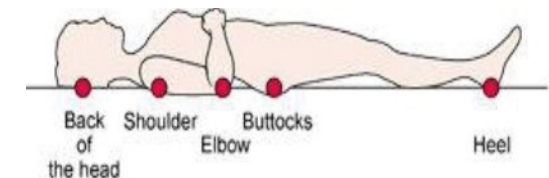


Diagram showing areas of the body at risk of pressure sores when sitting



**Avoid sitting or lying on an area of existing redness.**

**The staff in the ward will teach you the pressure relieving manoeuvres for seated or lying positions**