Pressure Injury

WHAT IS IT?

A pressure injury is a wound caused by . . . you guessed it: pressure! Pressure reduces or stops blood flow to an area, causing the skin and underlying tissues to break down and a wound to occur. In some cases the wound can go right to the bone. Pressure injuries are common over areas where the bone is close to the surface, such as at the base of the spine, on the hips and over the ankles or other vulnerable areas such as ears. If pressure is on the area for too long the skin and tissue in that area die. The result is a pressure injury.

Certain medications you are on, injuries to nerves caused by trauma, or diseases such as multiple sclerosis, may limit your ability to feel some sensations such as pain or other types of discomfort. If you can't feel the discomfort that usually comes with reduced blood flow, you are less likely to move to get the pressure off the area.

WHAT CAN I DO MYSELF (DIY)?

Removing pressure is key. Pressure blocks off blood flow, so you need to "reposition" yourself, or move, to allow blood to flow back into the area. This means you must **move regularly,** even if the movements are small (and sometimes that's all it takes). If you have issues that affect your ability to move it is also important that EVERY SURFACE you sit or lie on is designed to lower the pressure. This includes your wheelchair and bed and even your sofa, kitchen chair or car seat.

Disclaimer: *The content in this resource is for informational purposes only and is NOT a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. You should always consult with your health-care professional before starting any new treatment or changing or stopping an existing treatment.*

WHEN DO I CALL IN A PRO?

You may need to consult a physical therapist or occupational therapist who can help you choose the right surfaces to sleep or sit on. There are many types of specially designed furniture pieces available. If you have a pressure injury that persists or you are unsure of the care required you may need to call in a wound care specialist.

THE KEY RULE

Be aware of and remove or reduce pressure from bony areas.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Another set of free resources, called the Care at Home series, may also be of interest to you, especially Caring for Pressure Injuries at Home: Preventing and Managing Pressure Injuries.

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