



Pressure Ulcers

Pressure ulcers can be serious and lead to life-threatening complications, such as blood poisoning and gangrene and can be a sign of neglect if an adult has care and support needs.

Top tips to prevent pressure ulcers:

1. Know who is at greatest risk of pressure ulcers.
Limited mobility or being unable to change position without help - Moist skin as well as thin, dry, or weak skin - Lack of sensitivity to pain or discomfort - Previous tissue damage -A loss of feeling in part of the body - Inadequate diet or fluid intake - Having had a pressure ulcer before - A significant cognitive impairment - Poor blood supply - Medical condition.
2. Has a qualified nurse carried out and documented a pressure ulcer risk assessment as part of an initial assessment of their patient.
3. If the patient has been assessed as high risk due to several risk factors or a previous history of a pressure ulcer, a skin assessment also needs to be completed.
4. Has the risk assessment been reviewed following:
 - After surgery or other investigation.
 - If they move to a different care setting.
 - If their underlying condition worsens.
 - After a change in their mobility.
5. Ensure that a care plan has been completed and consists of:
 - A focus on actions required to prevent a pressure ulcer from developing.
 - The results of both the pressure ulcer and skin assessments.
 - The need for any extra pressure relieving equipment.
 - The person's mobility and ability to change position unaided.
 - Any other conditions.
 - The patient's own views and wishes, including whether they can understand the risks and make an informed decision. If not, use of the Mental Capacity Act may be necessary.
6. Give repositioning advice
 - Changing position independently or aided will reduce or remove the pressure on a particular area which helps in preventing pressure ulcers.
 - Remember repositioning is recommended every 4- 6 hour depending on risk.
 - Agree with the individual a 'patient-centred' approach when establishing a repositioning regime. Or consider using the Mental Capacity Act to aid with decision making for the best interests of the individual.
7. Ensure information has been given to patients on how to prevent pressure ulcers developing which includes causes and signs to look out for. Refer to <https://www.nationalwoundcarestrategy.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/NWCSP-PU-Clinical-Recommendations-and-pathway-final-24.10.23.pdf> - Appendix 4 aSSKING framework.