

## Resources

### In your community

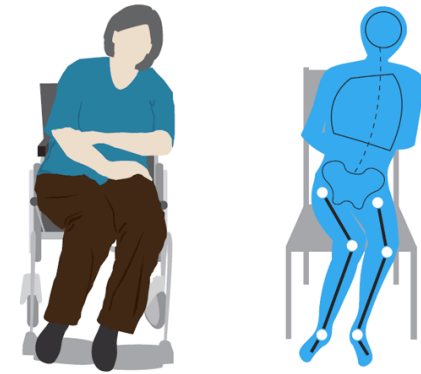
- ⇒ Columbia Medical Center
- ⇒ Tyrrell County Health Department

### Online

- ⇒ <http://www.npuap.org/resources/>  
The National Pressure Ulcer Advisory Panel offers education on such topics as nutrition, pain, avoidable vs. unavoidable ulcers, and more.
- ⇒ <http://www.nhqualitycampaign.org/files/factsheets/Consumer%20Fact%20Sheet%20-%20Pressure%20Ulcers.pdf>  
This guide is written for nursing care staff, but is easy to read and summarizes care strategies you can do at home as well.



Prevention



What you can  
do about  
pressure  
ulcers

Take Charge of Your Health!



## Your Part: Prevention is Key

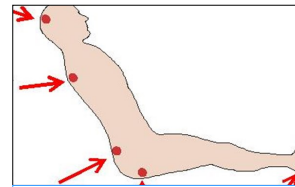
It is much easier to prevent a pressure ulcer than to treat an existing one. These strategies should be applied during treatment as well so that your wound can heal. If you see a red area on your body, especially over an area where a bone is close to the surface of the skin (such as the back of the heel, lower back/top of mid-buttocks, side of hip, or back of the head) and it does not turn white when you press on it, this could be an early pressure ulcer. Ulcers develop from the inside out, so when they finally do show on the surface of the skin, the damage is much worse underneath. Treatment will involve debridement (removal) of necrotic tissue. Don't worry, the tissue is dead so you won't feel it! The wound will unfortunately get bigger before it will get better. To prevent this long journey of healing a pressure ulcer, follow these strategies!



An early stage pressure ulcer

### How does an ulcer form?

It is important to reposition frequently to allow blood to return to areas of soft tissue that receive a lot of pressure in one position. This high pressure produces ischemia, a lack of blood flow to the tissue. In sitting, this happens under your ischial tuberosities or "sit bones." While lying in a reclined position, this happens under your sacrum, the bone just below your low back. Repositioning allows blood to flow back into the area, bringing nutrients and oxygen. If ischemia happens for a long enough period of time (and on some people this doesn't take long at all), the soft tissue will die. This is what causes a pressure ulcer. The speed at which you may develop an ulcer depends on the tolerance of your tissue, how active you are, how long you stay in one position, what kind of surface you are lying/sitting on, and your overall health. Eating a balanced diet with a lot of protein (aim for 1 gram for every 2.2 lb's of body weight if you do not have an ulcer and 2 grams for every 2.2 lb's of body



Common areas of pressure ulcers: head, shoulder, sacrum, buttock, and heel

weight if you do) and drinking lots of water (8, 8oz glasses a day) will help to promote healthy tissue.



### Repositioning

Remember not to drag your body when changing positions, but to lift your body instead. Avoid sitting or lying on oxygen tubes, drain or catheter tubes, large wrinkles or chording on bedding, buttons on clothing, etc. If you are ill and remain lying down for long periods of time, lay on your side at a 30° angle, not a 90° angle since this puts pressure on your hip bone. Use pillows like a wedge to make your self comfortable, but avoid placing them under your body (you should place one under your head of course!). Alternate to your back, and then the other side, every 15-20 minutes if you are in bed for long periods of time. Use a pillow under the back of your lower legs to keep your heels off the mattress when you are lying on your back.

**You can do it!**