



How to stop people from getting pressure ulcers



A guide for patients and their carers

About pressure ulcers



A **pressure ulcer** is an open sore on your body. A **sore** is when your skin is red and painful.

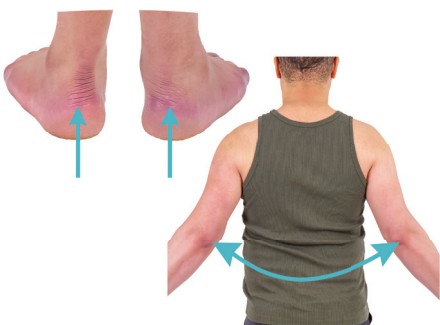
Pressure ulcers are sometimes called **bed sores**.



You can get pressure ulcers if you have to sit or lie in the same position for a long time.



This is what a pressure ulcer looks like when you first get one.

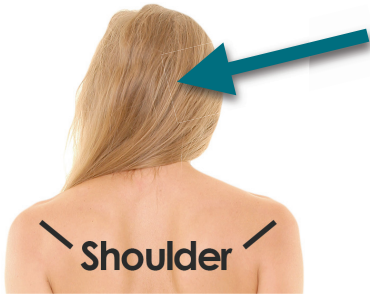


You are more likely to get a pressure ulcer:

- on your heels and elbows



- at the very bottom of your back and your bum



- on your shoulders and the back of your head

People who are more likely to get pressure ulcers

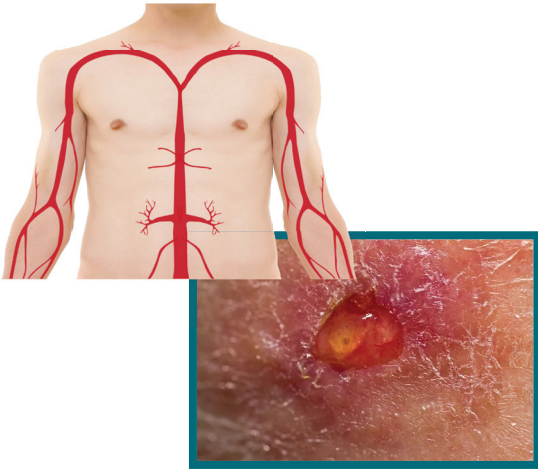


Some people have more chance of getting a pressure ulcer. This is people who:

- can't walk or move around by themselves.

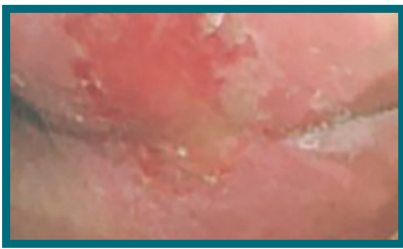


This could be because they use a wheelchair or have to stay in bed



- have poor **circulation**. **Circulation** is the flow of blood through your heart and around your body.

If you have poor circulation, blood cannot get to your skin properly. This could give you more chance of a pressure ulcer



- have skin that is wet or damp for too long. This might be if a person cannot go to the toilet themselves.



- already have a sore on their skin, or other skin problems



- don't eat healthy foods or drink lots of water. These are important to keep your skin healthy



- have lost weight or put weight on



- have damage to their **nerves** and can't feel pain



We have **nerves** all over our bodies and on our skin.

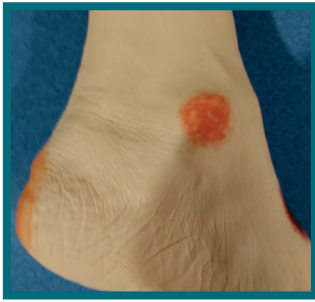


Our nerves tell us things like how hot or cold something is.



Our nerves can also tell our brains if something hurts.

Signs someone may have a pressure ulcer are:



- red or dark patches on the skin that won't go away



- pain and not being able to get comfortable



- blisters or swollen sore skin

How to check if you have a pressure ulcer



You can do a **press test**.

Press your skin for 15 seconds. If it turns white, it is ok.



If it stays red, it is a pressure ulcer.

If you have darker skin, there are other ways you can check for a pressure ulcer. Your skin might:



- look purple



- feel too hot or cold



- have patches where you can't feel anything



- be swollen or feel hard



- be painful to touch

Things you can do to stop pressure ulcers

The most important thing is to keep moving as much as possible. You should try to:



- walk on the spot for a few minutes every hour



- if you are sat down, lift your bum off the seat at least once every hour



- if you are in bed, do not stay in the same position for too long



- if you can't move yourself, your carer will need to move you often

Other things you can do



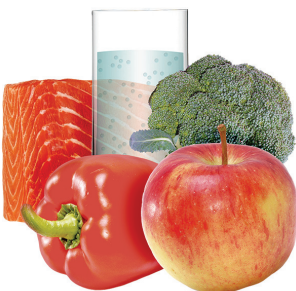
Check your skin often for any signs of pressure ulcers.



Only use **fragrance free** soaps and cleansers to wash your skin.



Fragrance free means it does not have perfume in it.



Make sure you eat a healthy diet. This means having the right mix of foods including lots of fruit and vegetables.



You need to drink plenty of water to keep your skin healthy.

Treating a pressure ulcer



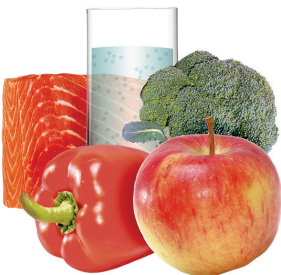
If you get a pressure ulcer you will see a special nurse. They will get you the right treatment.



The nurse might put a plaster or dressing on your ulcer.



There are special cushions, chairs and beds that can help people who cannot move about.



You can get support about how to have a healthy diet.



Your nurse will tell you how to look after your skin. They will help you to keep it clean and dry.



Contact us

If you are worried you might have a pressure ulcer, you can contact us:

By post:

**Tissue Viability
Jennifer Neale Unit
Lymphodema Centre
Braintree Community Hospital
Chadwick Drive
Braintree
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By phone:

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