

Preventing pressure ulcers

Information for patients, relatives and carers

This leaflet was developed to support patients in understanding pressure ulcers and how they can be prevented.

What is a pressure ulcer?

Pressure ulcers are sometimes called 'bed sores' or 'pressure sores'. Pressure ulcers are caused by prolonged pressure, friction or shear forces, which can harm the skin and the underlying tissues, damaging cells and stopping blood flow. Pressure ulcers often form over bony areas and can be very painful. They appear as open wounds, as air or fluid filled blisters, or can look like a bruise.

How will know I have a pressure ulcer?

Pressure ulcers can feel painful. Your nurse may ask permission to press on any areas at risk to check whether there is good blood flow – you may hear this being referred to as 'blanching test'.

Who is at risk of developing a pressure ulcer?

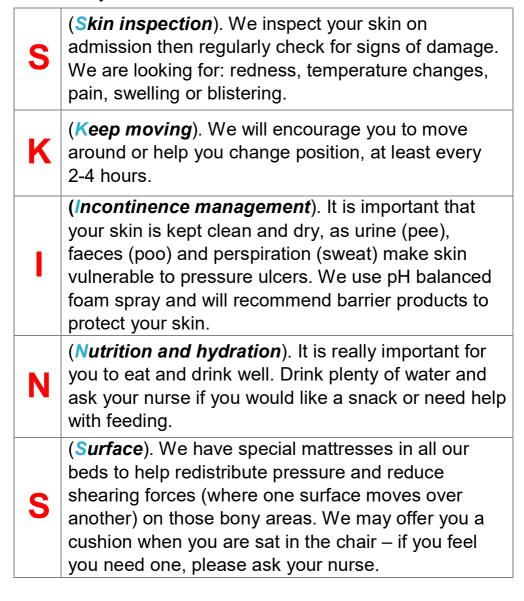
Anyone with poor mobility is at risk of developing a pressure ulcer. If you are not able to mobilise independently, you may need someone to assist you at least every 2-4 hours to encourage blood circulation to the skin.

Patients who do not eat well or drink enough fluids are at higher risk of developing a pressure ulcer, as tissues rely on good nutrition and hydration to remain healthy.

Other higher risk patients include those who had recent surgery, those with conditions that affect breathing, nerves and circulation or those on high dose steroids.

What can I do to avoid pressure ulcers?

At the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust we remember key areas in pressure ulcer prevention using the acronym 'SKINS':



What should I do if I suspect I have a pressure ulcer?

Tell your nurse as soon as possible and follow any advice that they give you.

Further information

Speak to your nurse if you have any questions or concerns.

Visit https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pressure-sores/



To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

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