

A light blue silhouette of a human figure stands on the left side of the slide, facing forward with arms slightly away from the body.

Skin

How to care and prevent pressure sores



What is a pressure sore?

A pressure ulcer is damage that occurs on the skin and underlying tissue.

They are caused by three main factors:

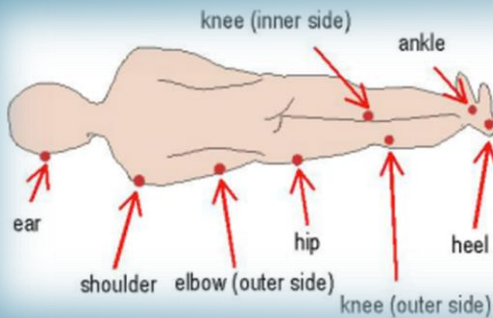
- **Pressure** – The weight of the body pressing down on an area of skin. Such as lying or sitting in the same position without relieving pressure.
- **Shearing** – When the area of skin is moving in different directions and causes the layers of skin to slide over deeper layers of the skin. Such as poor transfers.
- **Friction** – Similar to shearing but it can contribute to pressure ulcers by creating shear strain in deeper layers of the skin area. Such as severe spasms causing the body to move down the bed.
- **Other reasons** – Using inappropriate equipment, clothing and footwear being too small.

- <https://youtu.be/mLTNNTmHOdw>

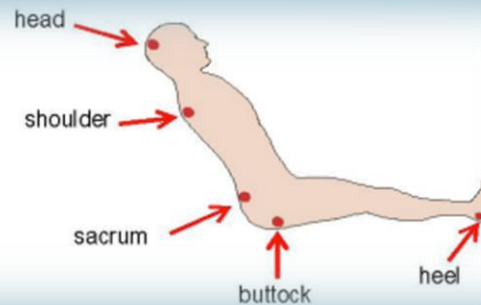


Where are the pressure points?

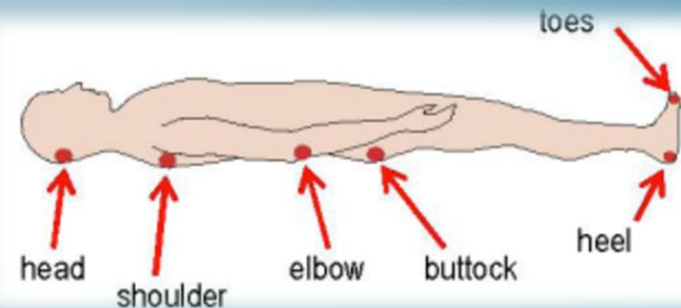
Lateral



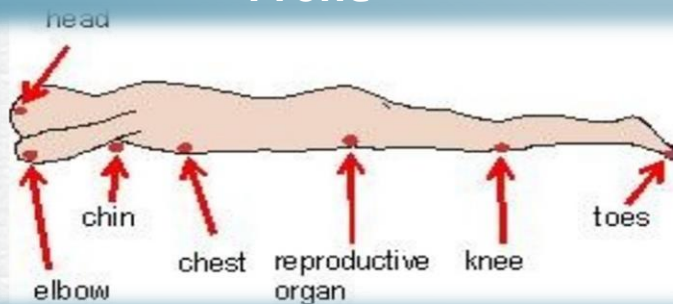
Sitting



Supine

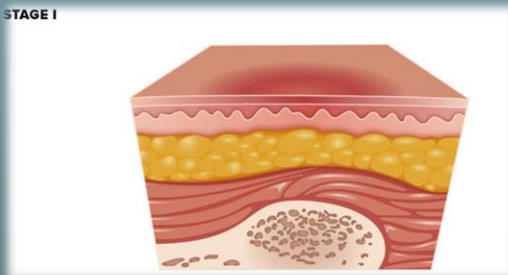


Prone



The Stages Of A Pressure Sore

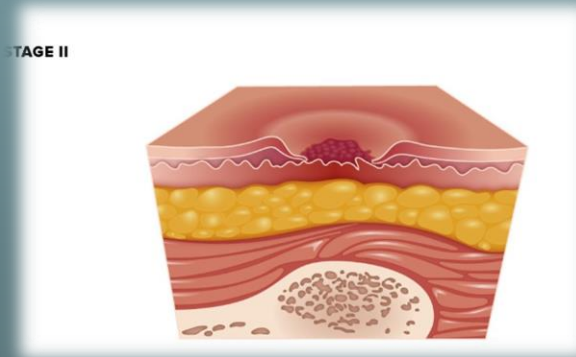
STAGE I



- Characterised by an area of red skin that does not blanch when pressed. This is due to the interruption in blood flow to that area
- The area may have some swelling and induration.
- Relieve pressure from that area immediately and keep off that area until resolved.

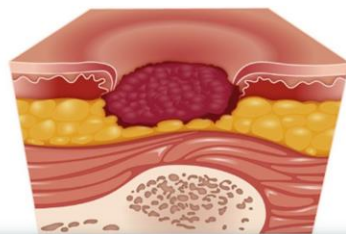
- Characterised by broken skin, exposing the upper layer of skin.
- This is usually superficial and often resembles a shallow, opened wound such as a popped blister.
- Relieve pressure from that area immediately and keep off that area. Also may need medical intervention depending on the wound. Keep clean and dry.

STAGE II



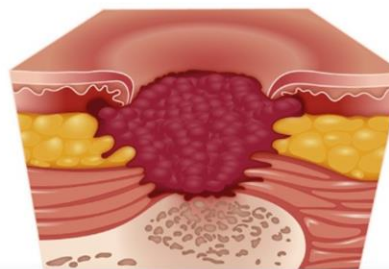
The Stages Of A Pressure Sore

STAGE III



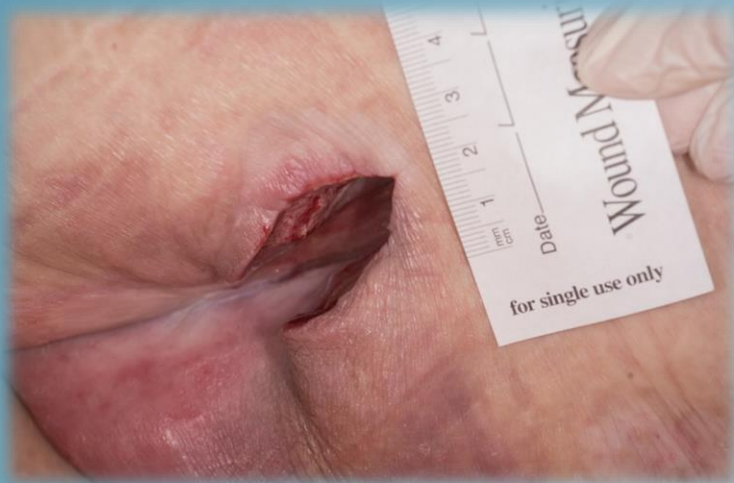
- Characterised by a small crater like wound that is as deep as the fatty layers of the skin.
- There may be visible pus and a foul smell.
- Higher the risk of infection and complications such as sepsis.
- Immediate medical intervention is needed such as starting on antibiotics, bed rest on an appropriate mattress, and necessary dressings to be undertaken by nursing professionals.

STAGE IV



- Characterised by an wound that is deep to your muscle, or to your bone.
- These types of wounds have a high risk of infection.
- Requires treatment immediately to prevent infections, will require surgery, negative pressure wound therapy, and bed rest on an appropriate mattress.

Pressure Sores



Preventing Pressure Sores

- Relieve pressure regularly or request assistance if unable to do yourself.
- Check your skin before getting up and returning to bed or request assistance if unable to do yourself.
- Keep affected areas pressure free.
- Choose suitable clothing.
- Take care when transferring so as not to bump or bang your skin.
- Avoid burns, do not carry hot drinks on your lap or between your legs.
- Treat spasms.
- Apply continence products as directed.
- Eat a balanced, healthy diet.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Keep you skin clean and dry.
- Apply moisturiser to skin twice a day.



References

- <https://nhs.stopthepressure.co.uk/patients.html>
- <https://www.spinal.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Pressure-Ulcers-the-basics.pdf>
- <https://www.healthline.com/health/stages-of-pressure-ulcers#stages-and-treatment>