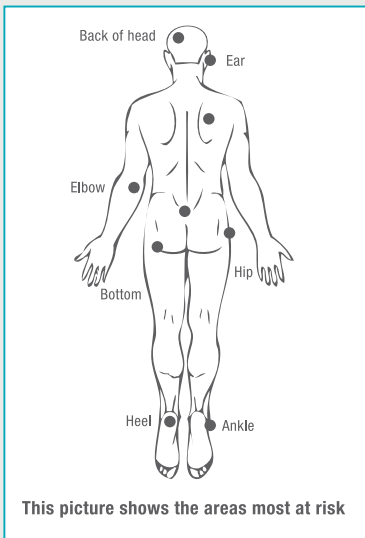
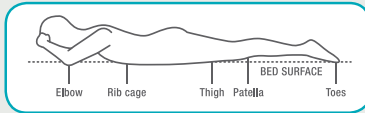
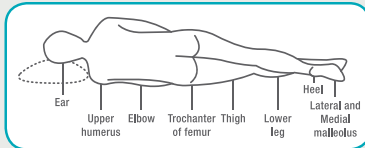
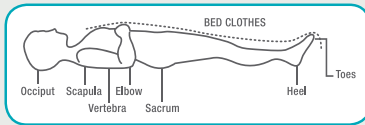


## Which parts of my body can develop pressure injuries?

Pressure injuries are most likely to occur on parts of the body which take the weight and usually over bony areas – especially the heels, elbows, hips, buttocks and tail bone; but can occur anywhere there is continued pressure to the skin. The diagram below illustrates places on your body at risk of a pressure injury.



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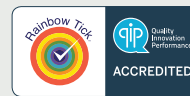
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## The Melbourne Clinic

# Prevention of Pressure Injuries

Information for patients, carers,  
family and support persons



## About this brochure

The information provided will explain to you about pressure injuries and what you can do to help avoid them.

## What is a pressure injury?

A pressure injury is also known as a pressure ulcer, pressure sore or bed sore. A pressure injury is an area of damaged skin and flesh. It is usually caused by sitting or lying in one position for too long, without moving to relieve the pressure.

A pressure injury can develop in only a few hours. It usually starts with the skin changing colour – it may appear slightly redder or darker than usual. If the pressure is not relieved, it can develop in a few days into an open blister and over a long period of time into a deep hole in the flesh.

## Why are pressure injuries a problem?

A pressure injury may look minor, such as redness of the skin, but they can hide more damage under the skin surface. Any time you lie or sit down in the same position for a period of time, pressure is applied to parts of your body.

Any object that has continuous contact with your skin has the potential to cause a pressure injury. A pressure injury can develop quickly, cause significant pain, become infected and leave scars.

## Am I at risk?

**Any person of any age may be at risk. You are at a higher risk of getting a pressure injury if you:**

- Have difficulty moving about
- Have general poor health and weakness
- Are elderly and weak
- Have had weight loss or weight gain
- Have poor circulation
- Are not eating a balanced diet or having enough to drink
- Have Diabetes, multiple sclerosis or a spinal cord injury
- Have past history of a pressure injury
- Spend long periods of time in bed
- Have excess moisture or dryness of the skin
- Are in a wheelchair
- Spend long periods of time in an armchair.

## What you can do

Move, move, move! Keep moving as often as you can, even small movements help. Change your position frequently when in bed or sitting in a chair.

### What to look for:

- Red/purple/blue skin
- Blisters
- Swelling
- Dry patches
- Shiny areas
- Warm or cool areas.

## Look after your skin

Skin grows thinner and less elastic with advancing age. This means that the blood circulation is less protected, and as a result the skin is easier to damage. Try and keep your skin clean and dry at all times. Let nursing staff know as soon as possible if clothing or bedding is damp.

Check your skin regularly and advise staff if you have any tenderness or soreness over a bony area or if you notice any reddened, blistered or broken skin. Your nurse will inspect your skin as part of your pressure injury prevention assessment. Bathe or shower in warm **not hot** water using a mild cleanser or soap, and dry your skin gently afterwards.

To prevent your skin from drying out and cracking, and to protect your skin from dry or cold air; use a moisturising lotion, but avoid massaging your skin over the bony parts of your body. It is also important to eat a balanced diet and drink regularly to keep your skin well hydrated.

