

Think about A.S.S.K.I.N.G

Everyone is vulnerable Information for infants, children and young people

What is a pressure ulcer?

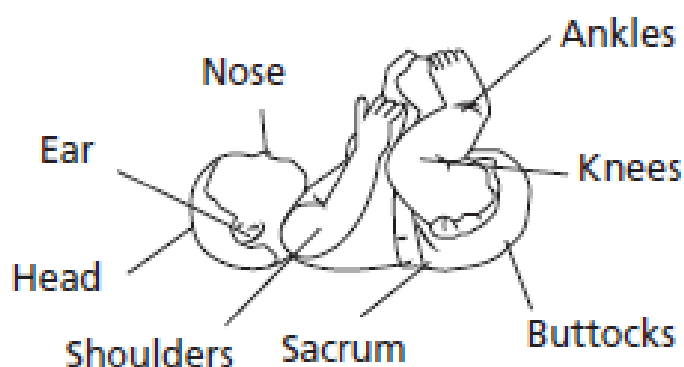
'A pressure ulcer is localised damage to the skin and/or underlying tissue, usually over a bony prominence (or related to a medical or other device) resulting from sustained pressure (including pressure associated with shear). The damage can be present as intact skin or an open ulcer and may be painful.' (NHSI 2018)

What can cause skin damage?

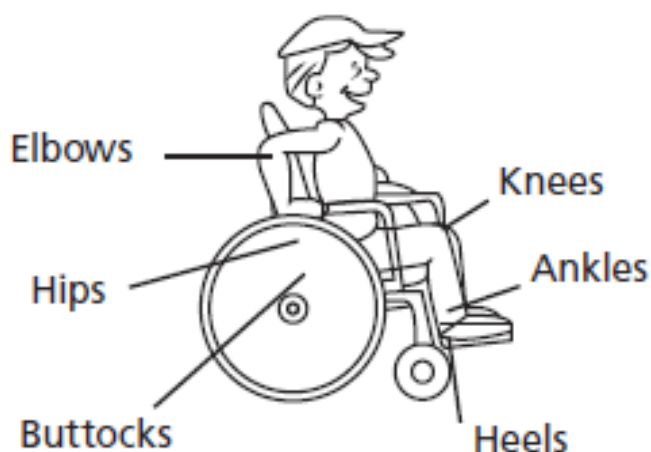
Pressure: Body weight applies pressure to the skin

Friction: Skin repeatedly rubbed, for example from ill fitting shoes or clothing

Shear: Movement which stretches the skin and underlying structures, for example when sliding up/down the bed



These areas are prone to skin damage, as well as areas of the skin in contact with medical devices.



What can I do to help? ... Think A.S.S.K.I.N.G

Maintaining healthy skin is important. As part of the patient assessment, the nursing team will consider the risk of skin deterioration and the development of pressure ulcers. If admitted to hospital, a Tissue Viability Assessment is completed at least once per week to identify signs of deterioration and support the implementation of appropriate care plans.

Skin care and inspection

Skin should be inspected at least once a day. If there is evidence of redness or deterioration, then the frequency of inspection should be increased.

It is important to check the skin underneath medical devices i.e. oxygen masks and nasogastric tubes. You also need to pay particular attention to bony prominences, such as the shoulders, elbows, hips, bottom, back of the head, ears, heels, between the ankles and knees.

“Regular inspection means early detection”

Signs of pressure damage

- Redness that does not fade when you press the skin lightly and then release
- When assessing people with darker skin it can be difficult to see areas of redness. Look out for skin that is shiny and looks blue or purple in colour
- When assessing people with lighter skin, look for redness that does not appear hot and painful. The skin colour can sometimes appear purple or maroon like a bruise; this could be a deep tissue injury and must be carefully observed
- Skin might be harder or softer than normal
- Skin or tissue may appear swollen
- Blistering that does not have any other obvious cause (such as an allergy or burn)

Surface

Be aware that there are many reasons why skin damage can occur. The use of medical devices or personal equipment like shoes, splints, glasses and wheelchairs, should be reviewed regularly to ensure that they are measured and fit appropriately.

Device usage or the sizing of specialist equipment should be reviewed if there is any change in skin condition. Further advice can be sought from your child's healthcare professional.

Keep moving

Special air mattresses and cushions will help but they don't replace the need to “keep moving”! Independent movement is encouraged where possible. Even slight movements can be effective. Infants, children and young people who are unable to move without assistance require regular repositioning to relieve pressure on their skin.

When lying in bed, sitting in a wheelchair or a chair for long periods of time, you should change position regularly. We recommend repositioning every two to four hours and using pressure relieving devices if available. This will help to relieve pressure on the skin and reduce the risk of skin damage.



Safe side lying is recommended but if not possible then using a 30 degree tilt may be helpful. A healthcare professional can help you with this.

It is important that you discuss concerns about skin or pain with a health care professional so that they can make an assessment and provide support if necessary.

Incontinence

When skin becomes wet or moist, irritation or soreness may occur. It may become fragile and more prone to skin damage.

Incontinence is when you have little or no control over your bladder or bowel; this can be age/development related or associated with a long or short term health condition.

When using continence products ensure they are sized correctly and the absorbency is appropriate.

Moisture not only comes from incontinence; it can also be caused by sweating and some types of medication. Care must be taken to monitor areas on the body where the skin folds, bottom areas and sites around medical devices e.g. a gastrostomy stoma.

Remember to avoid soaps and use a non-perfumed pH balanced cleanser instead. Always dry your skin gently and thoroughly and avoid talcum powder.

Barrier creams and products can help to provide a barrier from moisture. Options can be discussed with your child's healthcare professional.

Nutrition and hydration

A well balanced diet will help to keep the skin healthy. It can also help to prevent further deterioration and support the healing process.

In addition to food, fluids should be encouraged to maintain healthy and hydrated skin e.g. water, squash or milky drinks.

A poor diet can increase the risk of skin deterioration and increase the risk of obesity. Obesity can also increase pressure on the skin. It is important to eat healthily and move frequently to relieve the pressure from delicate areas or where the skin is over a bony prominence.

Please tell us if you are concerned about your child's nutritional intake. Advice can be provided and we can refer you to a dietician if appropriate.

Information for Patients

If you are a patient, parent or carer please tell us if:

1. You have found a red/discoloured/sore area of skin
2. There is a history of pressure ulcers
3. There is an underlying medical condition that may affect the skin
4. A special mattress or cushion is used at home
5. Movement is reduced
6. The bed, chair or cushion is affecting the skin
7. Incontinence or diarrhoea is making the skin sore
8. There is a decreased appetite or weight loss/gain
9. A surgical procedure is planned

If you have any queries, please contact a healthcare professional:

Whilst in hospital:

- Your nurse or doctor
- A tissue viability nurse specialist

If you are at home:

- Community Children's Nursing team
- School nurse or Health Visitor
- GP

For further information please visit:

- NICE guidance www.nice.org.uk/guidance
- European Pressure Ulcer Advisory Panel: EPUAP www.epuap.org
- React to Red / Your Turn Campaign www.reacttoredskin.co.uk
- Stop the pressure <http://nhs.stopthepressure.co.uk>

University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust

If you require this information in another format, such as a different language, large print, braille or audio version please ask a member of staff or email interpreting.service@uhb.nhs.uk.