

Your Resident is Counting on You!

What You Can Do to Prevent Pressure Ulcers



General:

- Be proud of what you have learned! Share it with other CNAs as you work together to care for residents. New CNAs will benefit when you share how to prevent pressure ulcers. Preventing pressure ulcers will make your work easier and will make your nursing home a better place to live for your resident!
- Review this information from time to time, so that you don't forget it.
- Thoroughly inspect the skin daily so that you can detect and report any problems **early**. Look at the skin every time you bathe or change a resident and report any concerns to the nurse. If she gets busy, help her to remember to check the resident.
- Clean skin is important. Wash soiled skin using a gentle soap and avoid harsh rubbing. Remember to use lotion to keep skin from being too dry.
- Don't be afraid to ask if you don't know or you think your resident needs something. Your residents are counting on you!

Moisture: Moisture increases the risk for pressure ulcers. Two sources of moisture are urine and sweat.

- Use moisture barrier in areas that tend to be wet, such as peri-area and buttocks. Ask the nurses to tell you which residents need barrier ointments. Ask if you think that a particular resident might need a barrier ointment.
- Change clothes, bedding, diapers, and linen as often as needed to keep the resident dry. Use pads or diapers that pull the moisture away from the skin.
- Bring residents to the bathroom often, when possible, to help keep them dry. If the resident can't get up, offer the bedpan or urinal frequently.

Nutrition: USUAL food intake.

- Help resident to eat and allow them enough time.
- Get foods they like (within their diet).
- Offer fluids frequently (as diet allows).
- Provide supplements as ordered. Serve them chilled if the resident prefers them cold. Encourage the resident to drink them.

- Encourage between meal snacks for residents that need them. Ask the nurse and dietician to tell you which residents need more calories and protein and which foods will meet these needs.
- Be sure to tell the nurse if a resident isn't eating well or is losing weight.

Watch For Residents Who Don't Feel Pressure On Their Skin

Some residents can't feel pressure or pain normally, so they can be injured without knowing it. They need for you to help keep them safe.

- Remember the shoe exercise? Check for anything that could be creating pressure on the skin. This might include improperly fitting or tight diapers or medical devices, such as catheters or oxygen cannulas.
- Be especially careful when transferring these residents or helping them to walk or move around. They may injure more easily and take longer to heal.

Mobility: Changing position and controlling body position.

- Float the heels, or use heel devices, when needed.
- Reposition at least every 2 hours for bed-bound residents; hourly for chair bound. Some residents may need to be moved more often.
- Teach the resident to reposition themselves, if possible. You may need to remind them, help them to do it.
- Use pillows for support and check for objects that may have gotten into all support surfaces.

Activity: Getting your resident to be active independently

- If the resident needs assistance with range of motion or help walking, make certain that it gets done and that the resident gets the help he/she needs.
- Encourage the resident to do as much as possible for himself, even if he does things very slowly. Be patient!

Friction & Shear: Ability to move without rubbing or dragging.

- Use a lift sheet to avoid dragging the resident.
- Soft socks on feet will help protect the skin, can promote slips and falls in residents who are able to move about.
- Long sleeves or elbow protectors may be needed.
- Keep the head of the bed at the lowest degree of elevation possible and limit the amount of time the head of the bed is elevated unless the resident's medical condition requires the head of the bed to be up.
- A trapeze may help some residents to avoid friction and shear. Remember the wax paper?