

THIBODAUX REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER wants you and your family to have the best care possible and we want to involve you in that care.

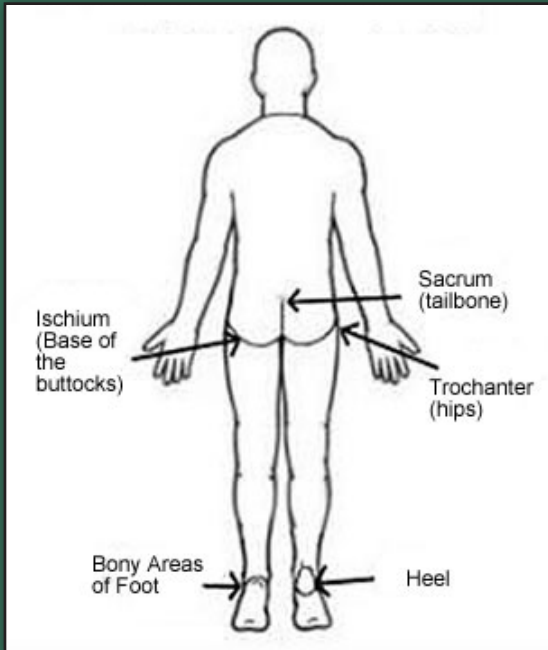
One area of concern when patients are admitted is the condition of their skin. During your admission, the nurse will carefully examine your skin for existing or potential injuries. Some patients are at a high risk for developing pressure injuries or "bed sores".



The skin is the body's largest organ and forms a protective barrier for the body. It protects the body against bacteria

and chemicals, and receives one third of the body's circulating blood supply. Blood vessels feed or nourish the skin. When these small blood vessels are squeezed from unrelieved pressure, they are unable to provide nutrients and oxygen that your skin needs. As a result, tissue may die and a pressure injury forms.

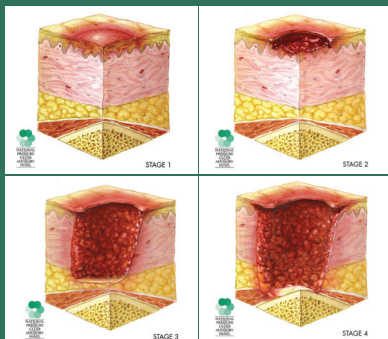
Most Common Areas for Pressure Injury Formation



If you have questions or problems after discharge, please contact your primary care provider or the Wound and Ostomy Department at Thibodaux Regional, 985.435.4804.

PRESSURE INJURIES:

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



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WHAT IS A PRESSURE INJURY AND WHAT CAUSES THEM?

Pressure injuries are areas of skin where breakdown has occurred. This can happen as a result of poor circulation to an area, continued pressure on an area, or the friction of a device such as a brace or catheter. Pressure injuries usually occur on the buttocks, hips, heels and elbows. The first sign of a developing pressure injury is when the skin becomes red or darker than surrounding skin. If the reddened area is not attended to, tissue damage can occur. The following conditions increase the risk for pressure injuries:

- *Cannot change positions*
- *Wetness from loss of stool or urine*
- *Not eating or drinking enough*
- *Confusion or reduced mental awareness*

WHAT CAN I DO TO PREVENT A PRESSURE INJURY?

It takes a team to prevent skin breakdown. By assisting your healthcare team, you may be able to reduce the risk of developing a pressure injury. Ask questions and help plan your care. Understand what and why things are being done. **Express your wants, needs and concerns. In other words: BE ACTIVE IN YOUR HEALTHCARE!**



KEY STEPS TO REDUCE/LIMIT SKIN BREAKDOWN:

LIMIT PRESSURE

- If you are unable to move yourself in bed, someone should change your position at least every two hours.
- If you are in a chair, your position should be changed at least every hour.
- If you are able to shift your own weight, you should do so every 15 minutes.

LESSEN SKIN IRRITATION

- When shifting positions or moving in your bed, don't pull or drag yourself across the sheets. Also, don't push or pull with your heels or elbows.
- Avoid repetitive movements such as rubbing your foot on the sheets to scratch an itch.
- Avoid doughnut shaped cushions- these can actually cause more harm than good!

TAKE CARE OF YOUR SKIN

- Have your skin looked at daily.
- If you notice any reddened, purple, painful or sore areas on your skin, notify your nurse as soon as possible.
- Clean your skin right away if you get urine or stool on it.
- Prevent dry skin by using moisturizing creams.
- Don't rub or massage skin over reddened, purple or sore parts of your body.

NUTRITION

- What you eat plays a key role in preventing pressure injuries. Ask your nurse how.
- Eating protein-rich foods like fish, poultry, beans, nuts and whole grains help heal skin.
- Eat well-balanced meals.

OTHER TIPS

- Pillows or foam wedges may be used to keep your knees or ankles from touching each other.
- Tell your nurse if you have a problem with leaking urine or stool.
- If leaking is a problem, use absorbent pads in bed and diapers when out of bed to keep moisture away from your skin.
- Avoid lying directly on your hip bone when on your side.
- Pillows may be placed under your legs from mid-calf to ankle to keep your heels off bed. Never put pressure behind the knee.

Get involved! Pressure injuries can lead to pain, infection, loss of function and increased hospital stay. Do your part! The best way for us to prevent skin breakdown is to work as a team.



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