

Skin care advice

A guide for patients and carers

*because
you matter*

**St Nicholas
Hospice Care**

A Registered Charity No. 287773

**For an alternative format or
language, please contact:
enquiries@stnh.org.uk**

As part of the admission process a member of the Nursing Team will ask you to participate in a skin care assessment. This enables more accurate skin care advice and for provision of the appropriate mattress, equipment and skin care products.

The skin care assessment will be advised, but you do have a right to make an informed decision to decline, and if staff have advised that you need to be repositioned regularly you do have a right to choose.

The risks of not being repositioned are:

- Soreness and pressure ulcers
- Overall stiffness
- Increased pain
- Frequent dressing changes if a pressure ulcer develops.

Skin assessment for skin damage

If you wish the nurse can teach you how to inspect your own skin for signs of damage. Look for pink/red changes, abrasions, heat, blisters, shiny patches, hard, swollen or painful areas. If you notice any of these warning signs, inform the nurse immediately.

- Tell us if you are not eating as much as you used to
- Tell us if you develop a sore area
- Tell us if you have reduced feeling in your feet
- Tell us if you have had a pressure area before
- Tell us if you cannot change position without our help.

Pressure ulcers

A pressure ulcer is damage to the skin. This occurs when pressure is applied to the same area of skin for a length of time and cuts off the blood supply.

A pressure ulcer may initially appear as an area of red skin that does not disappear when you press it. People with darker pigmented skin should look for signs of skin change such as heat, swelling and pain. Continued pressure may cause the skin to break down. The common areas for pressure ulcers to develop are bony prominent areas.

What causes pressure ulcers?

Pressure – from body weight pressing against a surface

Shearing – this occurs if you slide down or drag yourself up the bed or chair and may damage the deeper layers of skin.

Pressure ulcers can affect anyone but the people most high risk are those with:

- Poor or loss of mobility - any individual having difficulty moving or changing position for a prolonged period of time or without help
- Poor nutrition, dehydration and weight loss.
- Unable to move themselves
- Poor circulation
- Loss of bladder or bowel control.

Prevention

- Regular inspection for early signs of pressure damage
- Moving around and changing position as much as possible, please ask if you need help to move and the bed control can be used to reduce pressure too.
- Pressure-relieving mattress and cushions and other equipment
- Moisturise your skin
- Keep your skin clean and dry.

Try not to worry- pressure ulcers will sometimes happen even if you are doing everything you can to avoid them.

Hospice **Advice line**

Call our 24/7 advice line for health care professionals and families if you need support with symptom management and end-of-life care.

enquiries@stnh.org.uk

www.stnicholashospice.org.uk

01284 766133

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