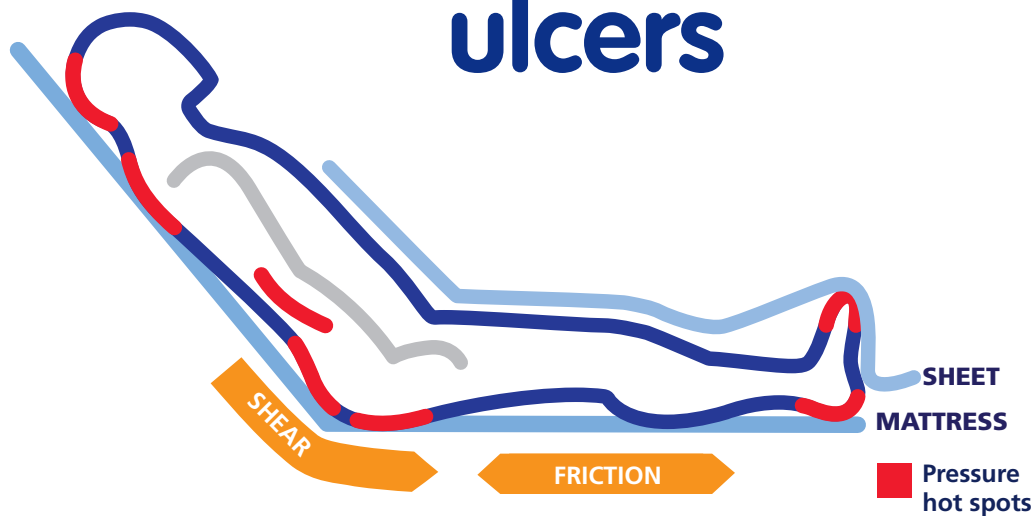
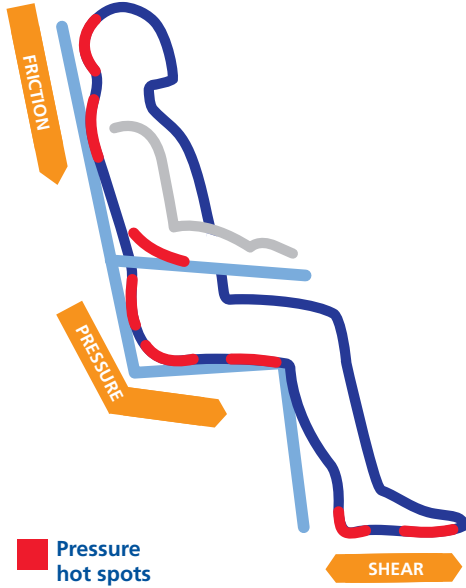


Prevention and treatment of pressure ulcers

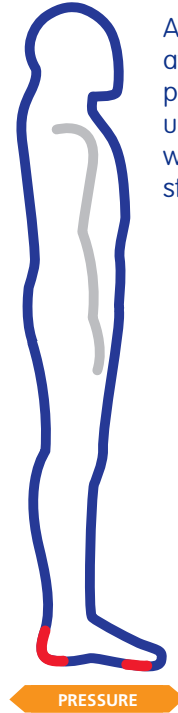


REMEMBER: A hot spot is NOT a good spot

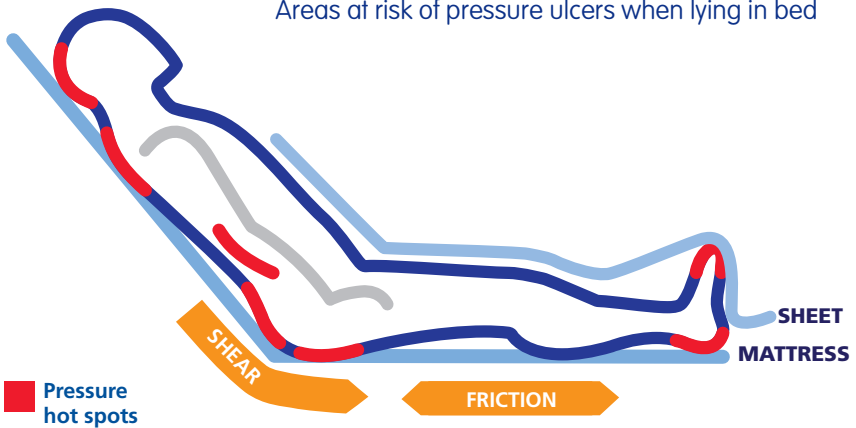
Areas at risk of pressure ulcers when sitting down



Areas at risk of pressure ulcers when standing



Areas at risk of pressure ulcers when lying in bed



What is a pressure ulcer?

A pressure ulcer (sometimes called a bed sore) is an area of damage to the skin and underlying tissue. Pressure ulcers can affect not just the skin, but also the fatty tissue beneath the skin.

Apart from being very painful, a pressure ulcer could affect recovery from your illness, cause pain, discomfort and distress and could result in an admission to hospital.

REMEMBER, the majority of pressure ulcers are avoidable.

How do pressure ulcers develop?

Pressure ulcers can develop because of any of the following reasons:

Pressure—the weight of the body can squash the skin of people at risk of pressure damage. For example, sitting in a chair for a long period of time or lying in a bed without moving can cause the skin to break down. Items that apply pressure, such as tight shoes, can also cause pressure ulcers, this can cause damage to the blood supply which then leads to skin break down.

Friction—this can happen when you slide down or are moved in a bed or chair without correct movement and handling care. Even new shoes can cause friction, such as to the back of the heel.

Rubbing (shearing)—dragging or constant rubbing of the skin across a surface can cause grazing which will weaken the skin. Even rubbing the skin 'to get the circulation going' can cause damage to the skin and should be avoided.

REMEMBER, a pressure ulcer can develop in only a few hours.

Where is a pressure ulcer most likely to appear?

The bony parts of the body are particularly at risk of pressure damage. These include: heels, elbows, bottom, hips, shoulders, spine and at the back of the head.

REMEMBER, depending on your general health and mobility, pressure ulcers can develop anywhere on the body.

Who is most at risk of developing a pressure ulcer?

Anyone can develop a pressure ulcer, although some people are more at risk than others. These include:

- People who are unable to move or change position without help
- Elderly people; their skin becomes thinner and less elastic with age
- People who have become ill or have a long standing illness
- People with reduced sensitivity to pain or discomfort
- People with poor circulation
- People with awareness and memory problems
- People who have problems with continence
- People who are not eating a well-balanced diet. Drinking plenty of liquids is also essential for healthy skin.

How do you spot pressure damage?

An early sign of pressure damage is the development of a reddened area of skin which is 'hot' to touch and, when lightly pressed, remains red.

Undamaged skin turns white for a few seconds when lightly pressed and then returns to its natural colour. Patients with a dark pigmented skin may develop a purple/blue patch. Blisters can also be an early sign of pressure damage.

REMEMBER a hot spot is NOT a good spot.

What should you do if you are concerned that you or someone you care for is at risk or has developed a pressure ulcer?

You should seek advice from a health professional. This could be through your local GP, NHS Direct or, if in hospital or a nursing home, with the nursing staff.

REMEMBER, health professionals rely on you to report concerns so that they can help you relieve pressure and reduce risks.

What health professionals can do to help

The health professional will examine the person's general health—this will help them establish if there is a risk of a pressure ulcer developing. Advice and support will be offered and a care plan developed, if needed. This may involve the use of a special mattress for the bed and a pressure-reducing cushion for when the person is sat out of bed.

REMEMBER, if you are able, you will be encouraged to check your own skin daily.

If you, or someone you care for, has a pressure ulcer

Your healthcare team will use a range of treatments and approaches to prevent the pressure ulcer from getting worse and to heal as quickly as possible. Their approach to care may include the use of special beds, mattresses and dressings, each of which will be discussed fully.

REMEMBER, as part of the care plan, the pressure ulcer will be looked at and may be drawn or photographed regularly by the healthcare team.

What you can do to help

- Change positions regularly. If you are mobile get up and walk around as often as you feel able or at least every two hours.
- Eat a well-balanced, high protein diet. Include fish, meat and eggs and try to drink plenty of fluids.
- If you are immobile but sitting in a chair, try lifting your weight from side-to-side to relieve the pressure on your bottom.
- If you have your legs stretched out in front of you, make sure your feet are resting flat on the floor.
- If you are being nursed in bed and are able, change your position frequently. Try lying on alternate sides, sit up slightly and try to distribute pressure evenly. If you are unable to move yourself you should be assisted by your carers or healthcare team to change your position regularly.
- Keep your skin clean and dry.
- Check your own skin, especially heels, bottom and elbows. Signs to look out for are heat, redness, swelling, blisters, cracks in the skin and pain. Remember a hot spot is NOT a good spot.
- Ask a carer or member of the healthcare team if you have any concerns.

REMEMBER, please help us to help you because prevention is better than cure.

If you are caring for someone then you can help the person by encouraging/assisting them with the above points. If you have any concerns contact a member of the healthcare team.

Useful information

Questions, comments and compliments

If you live in Kirklees

For more information, contact NHS Kirklees' Customer Liaison Service on 01484 464464. You can also email your enquiry to: enquiries@kirklees.nhs.uk or write to:

NHS Kirklees
Customer Liaison Service
Broad Lea House
Bradley Business Park
Dyson Wood Way
Bradley
Huddersfield
HD2 1GZ

If you live in Calderdale

For more information, contact NHS Calderdale's Customer Services Team on 0800 183 0912. You can also email your enquiry to: customer.services@calderdale-pct.nhs.uk or write to:

NHS Calderdale
Customer Services Team
4th Floor, F Mill
Dean Clough
Halifax
HX3 5AX

NHS Kirklees
Broad Lea House
Bradley Business Park
Dyson Wood Way
Bradley
Huddersfield
HD2 1GZ

Switchboard: 01484 464000
Web: www.kirklees.nhs.uk

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