

Pressure Injuries

What is a pressure injury?

A pressure injury is sometimes called an ulcer or bed sore. The injuries are a result of constant pressure on the skin underneath a bony area. The most common places are the hip, tail bone, back of the head, heels and elbows. It starts as a red area and will get worse and cause skin damage if the pressure is not relieved. Some common causes of pressure injuries are:

- Poor sensation.
- Limited movement.
- Being confined to bed for a few days or more.
- Being confined to a wheelchair.
- Braces or splints that do not fit well.



How do I know my child has a pressure injury?

You will see:

- A red area that does not fade after an hour; or
- An area of skin that is open and does not heal.



How do I help my child prevent a pressure injury?

To help your child prevent a pressure injury:

- Help your child shift weight often. For example, if your child is in a wheelchair, have your child do a pushup one time every 15 minutes.
- If your child is confined to bed, help your child change position at least every 2 hours.
- Do not pull or rub hard on the skin.
- Do not pull a diaper out from underneath your child when your child is laying flat.
- Keep your child's skin dry and clean.
- Make sure your child's skin is moisturized.

Do not use doughnut type cushions to support parts of your child's body.

How do I treat a pressure injury?

The best thing you can do is to check your child's skin carefully at least one time each day. This way, you will see a problem **before** an injury starts. If you see an area of skin that is red and the redness does not go away in an hour or if the skin is irritated, call your child's doctor.

Treatment (continued)

It is important to keep pressure off of the area. If your child sits up in a chair for a long time during the day, they may need to lie down during the day to lessen the pressure. The doctor will tell you what to do to help the pressure injury heal. Your child may need a special dressing to help the area heal.

ALERT: Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child has:

- Any skin area that stays red for more than 6 hours.
- Special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

This teaching sheet is meant to help you care for your child. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up.