

## Pressure relieving mattresses and cushions

If you are at risk of developing a pressure ulcer, or already have a pressure ulcer, we will use different types of mattress and cushions for your bed and chair. These can reduce the pressure on your bony prominences and help prevent or treat pressure ulcers.

### Further information

This booklet has been adapted from: *Pressure Ulcers: Prevention & Management* (NICE Clinical Guideline 179, 2015)

If you would like more information about pressure ulcers please

see <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Pressure-ulcers/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

contact RUH Tissue Viability service  
01225 821112 [ruh-tr.TissueViabilityNurse@nhs.net](mailto:ruh-tr.TissueViabilityNurse@nhs.net)

# Preventing and Treating Pressure Ulcers

What you can do to help prevent pressure ulcers and to help treat your pressure ulcers

Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust  
Combe Park, Bath BA1 3NG  
01225 428331 [www.ruh.nhs.uk](http://www.ruh.nhs.uk)

Please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) if you require this leaflet in a different format, or would like to feedback your experience of the hospital.

Email [ruh-tr.PatientAdviceandLiaisonService@nhs.net](mailto:ruh-tr.PatientAdviceandLiaisonService@nhs.net)  
telephone 01225 825656.

or

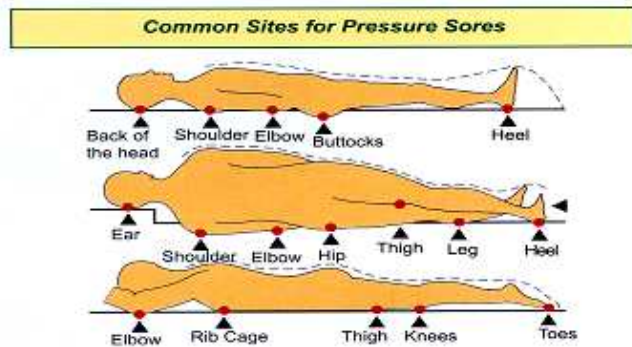


## What is a pressure ulcer?

A pressure ulcer (also known as a bed sore or pressure sore) is damage that occurs to your skin and underlying tissue. They can be caused for many reasons including:

- **Pressure:** the weight of the body pressing down on your skin
- **Shear:** the layers of your skin or deeper tissue sliding over one another, for example if you slide down or are pulled up a bed.

Pressure ulcers usually happen over bony prominences (bones close to the skin).



They can develop very quickly if you are unable to move; sometimes within a few hours.

Pressure Ulcers can be very serious and take a long time to heal. They may cause pain, or lead to a longer stay in hospital. In extreme cases, pressure ulcers can be life threatening.

## You can get a pressure ulcer

You are at risk of getting a pressure ulcer depending on your medical problems, nutritional condition, age and ability to move.

If you already have a pressure ulcer or have had one in the past are also at risk of developing another one.

## What you can do to prevent getting pressure ulcers

- Whether you are in a bed, chair or wheelchair you should **move around and change your position** as often as possible.
- You, or your carer, **look at your skin** to check for signs of pressure ulcers.
- Tell a ward nurse immediately if you notice any skin changes or develop a painful area over a bony prominence.
- **Eat well and drink enough water.**
- If you smoke, **stop or reduce cigarette smoking.**
- If you already have a pressure ulcer you should not lie or sit on the ulcer as it will make the ulcer worse.

## Skin and pressure ulcer assessment

During your stay in the RUH you will be assessed to see if you are at risk of getting, or already have a pressure ulcer. This assessment is carried out by nurses on the day you arrive on the ward and on a regular basis after that.

## How your pressure ulcers will be treated

If you have a pressure ulcer while you are in the RUH treatments include:

- Regularly changing position
- Regularly moving around
- Using different types of mattress and cushions
- Dressing the wound, if required
- Removing damaged skin
- Taking antibiotics or having antibacterial dressings, if you have a wound infection
- You may see specialists, such as Tissue Viability Nurses.