A pressure injury, also called pressure sore, bedsore, wound or decubitis ulcer, is an injury to the skin or tissue over a bony area. Pressure injuries can form over any area but are most common on the back, buttocks, hips and heels. Pressure injuries can form under special bodily worn equipment such as cast, respiratory mask, drains or tubes. Sitting or lying in one position without moving puts pressure on your skin and slows down blood flow. When blood flow slows down, skin and tissue can die and result in a pressure injury.
PREVENTION

KEEP YOUR SKIN CLEAN, DRY AND MOISTURIZED
• Use mild soap and warm water to clean your skin.
• Do not rub or scrub when you wash.
• Do not use products that contain alcohol, because they can dry out your skin.
• Gently pat your skin dry. Do not rub your skin with a towel.
• Apply lotion or a moisturizer on your skin often.

EAT A VARIETY OF HEALTHY FOODS
• Healthy foods include fruits, vegetables, whole-grain breads, and fish.
• Foods that are high in protein may help your pressure injury heal.
  This includes lean meats, beans, milk, yogurt, and cheese.
• Nutrition shakes may also give you extra calories and protein if you have trouble eating or are underweight.
• Obtain Nutritionist assistance for specific information.
  Request from Healthcare professional.
• Drink 6-8 glasses of water or fluids per day.

CHECK YOUR SKIN SEVERAL TIMES EACH DAY
• Check for red skin, or other color changes over bony areas.
  Use A mirror if you have trouble seeing certain areas, or ask another person to look. Report any changes to your healthcare professional.
• Apply moisturizer – lotion, especially after a bath or shower.
• Wash with warm (avoid hot) water and use gentle cleansers to minimize dryness. Recommend Dove soap.
• Avoid aggressive massage or massaging over bony areas such as hips.

CHANGE WET BEDDING AND CLOTHES RIGHT AWAY
• Clean skin well at each time of soiling.
  Do not wait, cleanse as soon as possible.
• Apply protectant cream to your skin to prevent irritation. Ask your healthcare professional for recommendation and or product to use.
• Use underpads or briefs that are absorbent and provide a quick drying surface for the skin.
• Keep bottom sheet smooth and clean. No crumbs, or hard items.

CHANGE YOUR POSITION OFTEN
• Change your position every 2 hours, more frequent if possible, if you are in a bed all day. Turn from your back to either side, minimizing time laying on your back.
• Change your position every hour if you are in a wheelchair all day, preferably adjust your weight every 15 mins.
• Use a good posture and sit upright in a wheelchair.
• Set an alarm to help remind you when it is time to turn.
• Keep a written turning schedule to help you remember to turn.
• If you are helping a person move in bed, lift him. Do not slide him.
• Keep the head of the bed as low as possible. This may help prevent damage to the skin from sliding down in bed.
• Use a chair cushion.
• Talk to your healthcare professional about getting a special mattress, overlay and cushion.

PROTECT THE SKIN OVER BONY AREAS
• Use pillows or foam wedges to keep bony areas from touching, and to relieve pressure. For example, put a pillow or foam wedge between your knees to keep them from pressing on one another.
• Place a pillow or foam wedge under you to keep your hip raised when you lie on your side. Do not rest directly on your hipbone.
• Put a foam pad or pillow under your legs from calf to ankle when you lie on your back. The pad or pillow should raise your heels so that they are not touching the bed.
• May use special offloading heel boots. Ask your healthcare provider for recommendations.

USE MEDICAL EQUIPMENT AND PADS
• A draw sheet or large pad under you may help others move you up in bed. An overhead trapeze can help you change positions in bed.
• Special mattresses or overlays (air mattress over your regular mattress) made to provide more cushioning may help decrease the risk of pressure injuries. Examples include a foam mattress pad and air mattress.
• Avoid doughnut shaped (ring cushions).
• Ask your healthcare professional equipment that may be right for you and how to use it.
CONTACT YOUR HEALTHCARE PROVIDER IF:

- YOU HAVE A FEVER
- YOU SEE RED OR PURPLE SKIN OVER A BONY AREA
- YOU SEE A BLISTER OR OPEN SORE OVER A BONY AREA
- YOUR SKIN FEELS WARM, SPONGY, OR TIGHT
- YOU HAVE NEW PAIN, OR PAIN THAT IS GETTING WORSE.
- YOU HAVE QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS ABOUT YOUR CONDITION OR CARE. WRITE DOWN YOUR QUESTIONS SO YOU REMEMBER TO ASK THEM DURING YOUR VISITS.

For additional information visit:
Visit My healthevet @ http://www.veteranshealthlibrary.org/
Contact the MVAHS Wound Care Clinic 305-575-7000 #13859

The VA Pressure Ulcer Resource (VA PUR) App is designed to help Veterans and their Caregivers learn about preventing and taking care of existing pressure ulcers/injuries. The VA PUR App is an easy-to-use tool that allows you to prevent, understand and track pressure ulcers/injuries. The app also provides access to other useful resources to help manage your daily care.

Features:
- Create journal entries to track your pressure ulcers/injuries
- Set reminders to move, eat and take medications
- Get background information about ulcers/injuries, and tips for daily care and prevention
- Watch videos to learn about pressure ulcers/injuries and safely repositioning
- Create a list of questions to ask in your next appointment
- Get immediate help and locate nearby medical facilities

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