

What you can do

When moving from one surface to another

- Use a slider sheet to keep from dragging skin across the bed or seat.
- If needed, use a mechanical lift.

When not controlling urine or bowels

- Keep the clothing next to your skin dry.
- Protect your skin with a 'moisture barrier' lotion.
- Use the toilet regularly and often.
- Ask someone to help you go to the toilet or use the commode, if needed.
- Try not to use adult briefs or diapers unless really needed. Ask your nurse or a skin and wound nurse for other options.

Keeping active

- Do as much for yourself as you can.
- Take part in daily activities.

Activity and exercise keep muscles strong enough for moving and changing positions.

Eating well

- Drink about 6 cups (1.5 litres) of liquid each day (unless you were told to drink less because of a health condition).
- Include the 4 food groups in your meals: vegetables and fruit; meat and other protein; dairy products; and grains. Examples of protein: meat, fish, chicken, turkey, eggs, milk, cheese, nuts, nut butters, seeds, beans, lentils, tofu
- If you don't have a good appetite, consider nutritional drinks or protein bars.
- If you need a special diet, talk to your dietitian or healthcare professional before making any diet changes.

When to get help

Tell your healthcare professional (doctor, nurse practitioner, nurse, etc.) when:

- You notice redness or signs of skin damage.
- Your health changes so that you cannot change positions, have reduced feeling in parts of your body, or have a sudden loss of weight.
- You are not able to control your urine or bowels.
- Your bowel movements (poop) are loose or watery.

For more information

Call 8-1-1 (HealthLinkBC) any time of the day or night.

- For diet questions, ask to speak to a registered dietitian.
- For health questions, ask to speak to a registered nurse.
- For medicine questions, ask to speak to a pharmacist.

Available in 130 languages.

For an interpreter, say your language in English. Wait until an interpreter comes on the phone.

Images:

- 'Pressure points in wheelchair' adapted with permission from Providence Health Care
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This information does not replace the advice given to you by your healthcare provider.

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Keep Your Skin Healthy



For patients, clients, residents

 **fraserhealth**

This pamphlet explains what you can do to keep your skin healthy, and when to ask for help.

Who is more likely to have skin damage?

Anyone. A person is more likely to get skin damage when they:

- stay in a bed, chair, or wheelchair for long periods of time
- have trouble moving some or all of their body, for example, because of pain, injury, paralysis, or coma
- have areas of skin constantly exposed to moisture, such as when not able to control urine (pee) or bowels (poop)
- have poor nutrition
- are not aware enough to know to clean their skin, eat, or change positions
- have poor circulation because of a health condition such as diabetes, heart disease, or lung disease

What is a pressure injury?

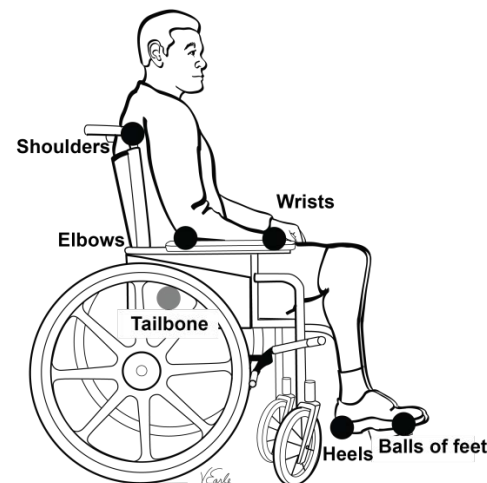
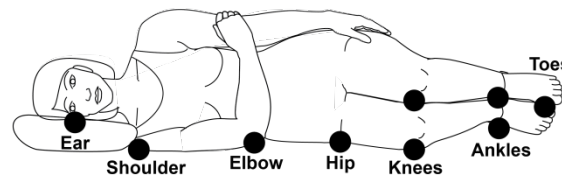
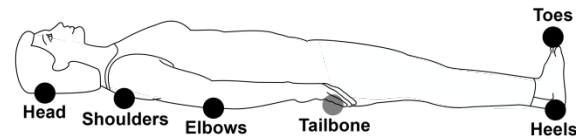
A pressure injury (also called a pressure sore, pressure ulcer, or bedsore) is an injury to the skin and tissues under the skin.

This happens when too much pressure is put on the skin for too long. The constant pressure cuts off the blood and nutrient supply to the skin and tissues.

Skin damage also happens with:

- repeated rubbing on the skin such as clothing or a mattress (friction rub)
- layers of skin forced to slide over each other like when you slide across a hard surface (shear force)
- moisture on the skin
- increased age
- certain medications

Common locations of skin damage



When cleaning your skin

- Look for new spots of redness.
- Wash each day with non-scented soap, water, and a soft cloth. Do not use hot water or scrub your skin.
- Pat your skin and all skin folds dry. Do not rub bony or red areas.
- Use non-scented lotion to moisturize your skin after washing. Do not put lotion between your toes.
- Do not use talc or powders in moist areas such as skin folds or creases.

When in a chair or wheelchair

- Sit in a correct position at all times:
 - head over your pelvis
 - hips and knees around a 90 degree angle
 - feet on a supportive surface
- Make small shifts in your position every 15 minutes.
- Change your whole position every 2 hours to lessen the pressure on bony areas.
- Use special cushions (ask your healthcare professional). Do not use donut-shaped ring cushions to sit on.
- Ask for help to move, if you need it.

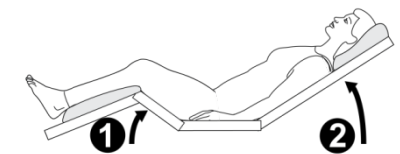


When in bed

- Use the fewest layers of linen under you – 1 layer is best.
- Make small shifts in your position every 15 minutes.
- Change your whole position every 2 hours to lessen the pressure on bony areas.
- Lay tilted on your side with your hips and shoulder tilted back about 30 degrees.



- Only raise the head of the bed higher than 30 degrees when eating or to help get out of bed, unless instructed differently.
- When raising the head of the bed, raise the foot of the bed first.



- At all times, keep your heels off any surface, even when using a special pressure-relieving mattress. Use pillows, wedges, or special heel boots to support your legs.