

Remember to



Wash Hands!

About Bed Sores:

Bed sores are pits or breaks in the skin in areas that don't get much blood flow (bony areas) or where sweat collects (folds of skin). They can be a dangerous tunnel for infection. Bed sores are much easier to prevent than to heal.

Risk Factors:

Thin skin, stroke, lung conditions, cancer treatment, diabetes, spinal cord injury, bed/chair-bound, poor circulation, very thin/overweight, age 65 and older



Use this Checklist to

Help Prevent Painful Bed Sores

- ✓ **Help make sure your loved one changes positions every two hours — even more often if your loved one can manage it.** (It helps to set a timer.)
- ✓ **Ask for an alternating air pressure mattress** and some type of pad to absorb moisture.
- ✓ **Make sure your loved one has foam cushions between ankles and knees, for elbows, and back of head.**
- ✓ **If the hospital gown or sheets become wet, get help to change them as soon as possible.** If you are able-bodied, help change the sheets.
- ✓ **Help make sure that nothing rubs or scratches your loved one's skin —** ask nurses about barrier cream for fragile skin areas.
- ✓ **When your loved one gets out of bed, either alone or with help, make sure it's done very gently to avoid scraping any skin.**
- ✓ **Ask the attending doctor about “upping” the protein in your loved one's diet.** Ask if it's OK for you to bring high-protein snacks, drinks or food.
- ✓ **It's OK to ask for the hospital wound care specialist if you have any concerns.** *Remember, bed sores are much easier to prevent than to heal!*

Help Make Sure

Nurses Check Your Loved One's Skin Every Day

If OK with your loved one, check his or her skin daily — or even more often.

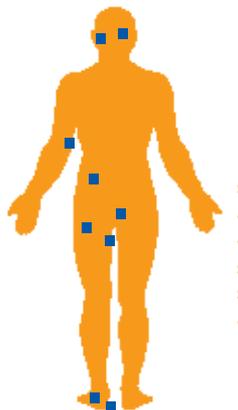
This is Where Nurses Look:

- The bony areas (see blue dots):

| | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| Back of head | Behind ears |
| Elbows | Hipbones |
| "Sit" bones | Tailbone |
| Knees | Heels |

- Areas where sweat collects:

Between buttocks
Between folds of fat
Under breasts



This is What Nurses Look For:

- **Any breaks or scrapes in the skin**
- **Abnormally white patches of skin** (especially on bony areas)
- **Pinkness, redness or swelling in the skin that doesn't go away in minutes**
- **Areas of skin that are extra-warm**

If Skin Problems Appear:

Make sure no pressure is put on the abnormal areas of skin for the next 24-48 hours, or until the skin is back to normal. Ask nurses for their attention and help.

Remember,
**It's OK to
Speak Up**