

# Wound Care: Pressure Ulcers



## What causes them?

Pressure ulcers are caused by the crushing of tiny blood vessels in the layers between bone and skin. This causes a loss of blood supply. If this continues for more than one to two hours the area dies, leaving dead tissue or “slough”. Older people and those with problems with circulation or sensation are high risk for pressure ulcers.

## What helps heal them?

1. Positioning the patient to keep pressure off the wound speeds healing. (See \*Qualis Health positioning card.) \*Used by permission.
2. Reposition the patient at least every two hours.
3. Keeping the area clean, moist and protected helps. This can be done with special ointments or bandages. Follow your health care provider’s directions carefully.
4. A healthy diet with lots of fruits, vegetables and protein (such as meat or beans) helps.
5. If the patient cannot do this, supplements of “Instant Breakfast”, Ensure® or a similar product will help.
6. Decreasing or stopping smoking or other tobacco use helps healing. If there are smokers in the house, they should go outdoors to smoke.
7. A good multivitamin with minerals such as \_\_\_\_\_ may help. Additional Vitamin C (500 mg one to two times a day) may help.

## Wound Care Instructions:

1. Cleanse the area with: \_\_\_\_\_.  
Remove any loose yellow, black or brown slough by scrubbing gently.  
If the wound is pink, don’t scrub.
2. Protect the skin around the wound edges with \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Apply \_\_\_\_\_ ointment/dressing to the wound.  
Special instructions: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Cover the dressing, if needed, with: \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Change the dressing \_\_\_\_\_ times per \_\_\_\_\_.

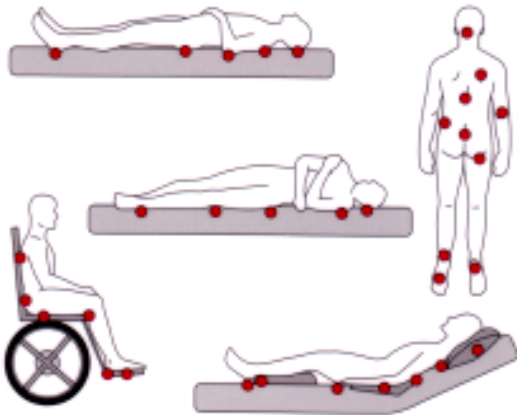
If there has been a lot of slough on the wound, once it becomes pink you will see an increase in clear drainage from the wound. This is normal.

## Please call your health care provider if:

- **you notice more redness, warmth, pain or swelling around the wound.**
- **there is yellow or green drainage, or a change in the odor of the wound.**
- **the patient develops a temperature more than three degrees above normal for him/her.**

## Pressure Points

Red circles indicate pressure points.



### Remember:

- Find out who's at risk
- Help patient eat right and drink fluids
- Make sure pressure is off the heels
- Remember to keep the skin dry
- Assess the skin daily
- Keep good records



Proper position while on side



Head of bed elevation limited to 30 degrees or less

Proper heel placement

### Pressure Ulcer Reduction Tips:

- Follow a written turning/positioning schedule
- Turn every two (2) hours in bed
- Use pressure reduction devices on bed, heels and chairs
- Use lift sheet or device to reduce shear and friction



Logo and materials created by AFMC

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A Gonzaga graduate nursing student, Lynda Arnold, RN, CWCN, created this informational material. It should be used in consultation with a health care provider.