

# Pressure Ulcer Prevention in Spinal Cord Injury

**Pressure ulcers are areas of damage to the skin and underlying tissue. They are also known as pressure sores or bed sores. Pressure ulcers are caused by :**

**Pressure**-normal body weight can squash the skin in people at risk and damage blood supply to the area, which can lead to tissue damage.

The following factors may also contribute to the development of ulcers:

**Shearing**- strain forces the skin and upper layers away from deeper layers of skin. This can happen when you slide down, or are dragged up, a bed or chair.

**Friction**-poor lifting and moving techniques can remove the top layers of skin. Repeated friction can increase the risk of pressure ulcers.



Do  
not  
let  
it  
get  
to  
this.



## Identify potential cause

- How old is the mattress/wheelchair cushion?
- Does your mattress have springs, buttons or heavy stitching?
- Do you have difficulty in transferring?
- Recent fall or knocked skin?
- No longer able to relieve pressure?
- Has your weight changed?
- Has your posture changed?
- Are you feeling low in mood ?
- Have you recently been unwell?
- Do you have a well balanced diet?
- Have you been drinking enough?

## Preventative measures

- Check skin before getting up and on return to bed.
- Drink 2-3 litres of fluids a day.
- Eat a well balanced diet.
- Keep your skin clean and dry.
- Consider moisturising very dry skin.
- Check condition of wheelchair cushion regularly.
- Check condition of mattress regularly.
- Check skin more frequently if using new equipment or undertaking new activities.
- Relieve the pressure from a mark.
- Consider bedrest if a pressure mark is over a seating area.

### Who can you contact for advice?

Your District Nurse.

**Community Liaison – Spinal Unit - 01722 429130**

**Pressure Clinic – Spinal Unit - 01722 429291**

**Avon Ward – Spinal Unit 01722 336262 ext. 2447**

**Tamar Ward – Spinal Unit 01722 336262 ext.. 2445**