



# pressure ulcers.

prevention is better than cure.

REACT TO RED SKIN  
**STOP**  
PRESSURE  
ULCERS

Anybody who sits or lies down for long periods of time is increasing their risk of getting pressure ulcers. Your Turn is designed to help people understand the causes of pressure ulcers and, therefore, prevent them in the first place.

There is a website to help answer some of the questions you might have about pressure ulcers, whether you or somebody you know might be at risk. Visit [www.reactoredskin.co.uk](http://www.reactoredskin.co.uk)

**For specific questions about your personal circumstances please seek advice from your healthcare professional.**



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# did you know that:

- Pressure ulcers are also known as bedsores or pressure sores
- Pressure ulcers can occur when someone sits or lies for too long in one position
- Everyone is at risk of developing a pressure ulcer, even fit healthy people
- A pressure ulcer is a sign that the body has shut down the blood supply feeding the skin

## Q Who is at risk of developing a pressure ulcer?

**A** The reality is that everybody is at risk of developing a pressure ulcer, it depends on circumstances. There are groups of people who are more at risk and these are the people that really need to understand how pressure ulcers develop:

People with limited mobility or those who cannot reposition without help

People who does not have a healthy circulation

People who cannot feel pain or pressure over all or part of their body

## Q What are the first signs that a pressure ulcer is developing?

**A** The first sign that the skin is being damaged is a patch of red skin, usually over a bony part of the body, which does not go white under light pressure. The area may also feel tender to touch, be swollen, be numb or be hot. If left untreated this patch of skin may become painful and purple in colour and eventually breakdown if pressure on the area is not reduced.

## Q What can I do to prevent a pressure ulcer occurring?

**A** There are some very simple things that you can do to prevent a pressure ulcer occurring. Avoid prolonged pressure on one area of the body, particularly if this is over a bony prominence (heels, bottom, lower back, hips etc), regularly changing position either whilst seated or in bed. Ideally this should mean moving every hour or even more regularly.

Regular checking of the skin to look for red marks will help to identify problem areas early. If you spot a red mark over a bony area then apply light pressure and see if the skin goes white - if it does there is still good circulation to this area. Make sure that you are moving regularly to reduce the amount of pressure this area is under. If the skin does not go white then circulation has been affected and you need to reposition regularly, keep well hydrated and keep checking for signs of improvement.

Be careful about how you move a person whose skin is at risk - if you drag someone over a surface such as a bed, you can cause damage to the skin. Ideally lift the person to reposition or use slide sheets.

If you are concerned about your skin or the skin of a loved one please speak to your local healthcare professional.

## Q Can pressure ulcers be treated?

**A** Pressure ulcers can be treated but it is much better to prevent them occurring in the first place. Treatment can involve specialist pressure relieving equipment, special diets and regular movement. You can help to reduce the risk of a pressure ulcer occurring in the first place by following the SKIN guideline:

S - Skin: regularly check areas at risk - is the skin red or sore

K - Keep moving regularly, little and often is best

I - Incontinence: have you become incontinent or has your incontinence deteriorated

N - Nutrition and Hydration: make sure you have a healthy balanced diet

For further information on the prevention of pressure ulcers visit [www.reactoredskin.co.uk](http://www.reactoredskin.co.uk)