

Pressure Injuries

This leaflet aims to answer your questions about what is a pressure injury, how they happen and what to do to prevent them.

What is a pressure injury?

A pressure ulcer is a localised area of damage to the skin and underlying tissue.

Tissue damage can range from a superficial red patch of skin through to a large open wound. Occasionally pressure ulcers can be serious. They can cause pain and infection and in severe cases the underlying muscle or bone can be destroyed.

What causes pressure injuries?

A combination of:

- Pressure – normal body weight can squash the skin and injure the blood supply to the skin & tissues, which can lead to damage in susceptible people
- Shearing – strain forces apart the layers of tissue. This can happen when you slide down, or are dragged up, a stretcher or aircraft seat.
- Friction – poor lifting and moving techniques can remove the top layers of the skin

Usually people can avoid the causes of pressure ulcers by moving around; however this may not be possible during transport. If you are being transported for more than 2 hours you may be at risk of developing a pressure ulcer.

Assessing your risk?

CareFlight clinical staff who are looking after you, will examine you and ask you questions to assess your risk of a pressure injury. If the assessment indicates that you are at risk; the nurse or doctor, will develop a plan of care to help prevent the development of a pressure ulcer during your transport. The prevention plan will be discussed and agreed with you and written into your medical record. This plan will be reassessed if there is a change in your condition or circumstances.

If you or your carer notices possible or actual signs of skin damage, you should inform the CareFlight staff immediately.

The most common sites for pressure damage are the **hips, base of the spine, buttocks and heels**, although, damage can occur almost anywhere on the skin.

FEEDBACK

We welcome compliments, comments, concerns and complaints in order to ensure we continue to provide high quality care to you. You can raise anything from comments to complaints with the professional delivering your care, or alternatively by contacting us.

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language, please contact us.

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