



## Falls Prevention

### Information for patients and carers

Did you know that many older patients fall while in Hospital and are at risk of falling when they have been discharged from hospital following their procedure? While some falls cause no injuries, others can cause serious harm. Falls can also result in you fearing further falls and make it harder for you to stay independent.

There are usually a number of reasons for someone falling. These may include poor balance, unfamiliar environments and obstacles, poor eyesight, unsafe footwear and some medicines, to name a few.

There are a number of ways to reduce your chance of falling. Staff will help you to stop falling by:

- helping you to settle in, keeping your surroundings safe, and providing you with a call bell should you require assistance
- assessing your risk of falling
- developing and implementing a falls prevention care plan suited to your needs

**Everyone has a role to play in preventing falls.**

**What can you do when you are in hospital?**

- Always use your call bell early if you require assistance and keep it in easy reach.
- Take your time when getting up from sitting or lying down.
- Let staff know if you feel unwell or unsteady on your feet.
- If staff recommend that you need assistance or supervision when moving, please ask them for this assistance and wait until they come to help you.

**What can you do after discharge?**

- If you have a walking aid, make sure it is in good condition and that you use it rather than using furniture or walls for balance.
- If you have spectacles, only wear your distance ones when walking. Take special care when using bifocal or multifocal glasses.
- Wear comfortable clothing that is not too long or loose. Whenever you are up and about, wear comfortable, low-heeled and nonslip shoes that fit you well, rather than slippers.
- Always keep your fluid levels up, because dehydration can disorient you.

*Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (ACSQHC), Falls Prevention: Information for patients and carers, Best Practice Guidelines 2009*



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# Move! Move! Move!

## How to avoid a pressure injury

### About pressure injuries

A pressure injury (also called a 'bed sore' or 'ulcer') is a painful wound that affects the skin and the flesh under it.

Your skin may:

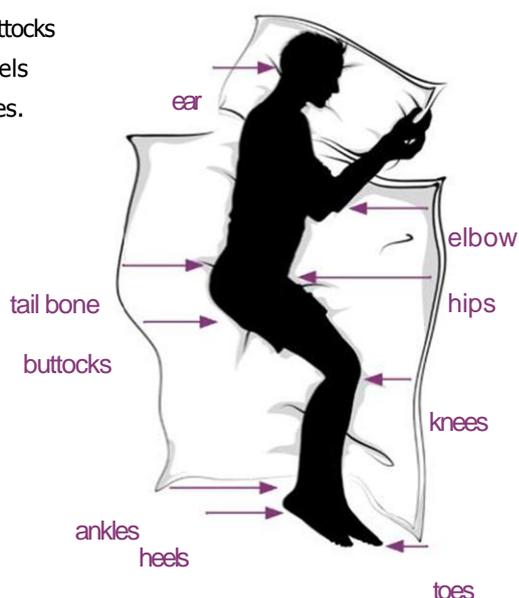
- look blistered
- change colour, usually to red
- feel hard or puffy
- feel warm
- break or split.



Your skin needs blood flow to be healthy. If you sit or lie in a chair a lot, over time the weight on the bony parts of your body stops blood from flowing.

Pressure injuries can show up over bony areas like:

- buttocks
- heels
- toes.



Other things can affect your skin:

- diabetes
- loss of bowel or bladder control
- numbness or spinal injury
- poor food choices.

### What to do?

#### 1. MOVE, MOVE, MOVE!

- Keep active – change how you sit or lie often. Even small body shifts help.
- Avoid sitting up in bed for long periods. This puts pressure on your tailbone.
- Ease sore spots with an air mattress, cushions, pillows or booties.

Staff will help if you can't do these things yourself.

#### 2. CHECK YOUR SKIN

- Is your skin red, blistered, or broken?
- Do you have any pain near a bony area?
- Are your bed or clothes damp?

Talk with your pharmacy about using:

- mild (pH-neutral) soaps
- water-based creams.

DO NOT rub or massage bony parts of your body. DO NOT use anything that will dry out your skin, like oils, powders or talc.

#### 3. EAT RIGHT

Eat a healthy and nutritious diet. If you have diabetes:

- check your blood glucose levels
- keep them in the normal range.

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