Pressure Ulcer Prevention

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What are pressure ulcers?

"Pressure ulcers are also called bedsores, or pressure sores. They can form when your skin and soft tissue press against a harder surface, such as a chair or bed, for a <u>prolonged time</u>. This pressure reduces blood supply to that area. Lack of blood supply can cause the <u>skin tissue in this area to become damaged or die</u>. When this happens, a pressure ulcer may form."

(Fathi, 2020)

Who are at high risk?

People who:

1. *Sit on a chair/ lie down in bed most of the time*
2. *Have history of previous pressure ulcer*
3. *Malnutrition (Underweight or overweight)*
4. *Existing medical condition e.g. diabetes, stroke*
5. *Unable to control bowels and/or bladder*
6. *Have decreased feeling in certain parts of the body*

(Edsberg et al., 2016)

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Prevention is key

✓ Early signs of pressure ulcer
- Skin redness and warmth
- Spongy or hard skin
- Top layers of skin started to break down

✓ Common areas to look out for
- Heels and ankles
- Tailbone area
- Spine
- Shoulders
- Ears
- Tip: Look out for areas which are consistently being pressed against the chair or the bed!

(Fathi, 2020)

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Simple Strategies for Prevention

✓ Good Skin Care
- Having good hygiene (e.g. changing soiled diapers promptly)
- Moisturising cream or barrier creams

✓ Proper nutrition
- Supplement protein if lacking for good skin health (approach healthcare professionals for advice!)

✓ Repositioning
- Changing positions to relief the pressure e.g. turning your loved ones regularly in bed if they are bedbound

✓ Having good support surfaces
- Alternating pressure relief air mattress

(Edsberg et al., 2016)

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References

Edsberg, L., Black, J., Goldberg, M., McNichol, L., Moore, L., Sieggreen, M. (2016). Revised national pressure ulcer advisory pabel pressure injury staging system. *Journal of Wound, Ostomy, and Continence Nursing, 43* (6), 585-597.

Fathi, R. (2020). *Preventing pressure ulcers*. Retrieved from https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000147.htm on 31 May 2021.

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