

## Ulcers and Wound Care



A wound is any break in the skin or underlying tissue. The skin can usually heal quickly and on its own, but some wounds do not heal easily; these are known as chronic wounds. A pressure ulcer, or decubitus ulcer, is an injury to the skin and underlying tissue that results from prolonged pressure on the skin. This occurs when there is too much pressure on the skin for a long time.

### Signs and symptoms

There are warning signs and symptoms of pressure ulcers, such as:



Changes in skin color and texture



Swelling



Suppuration



Areas of the skin that change temperature to the touch



Skin sensitivity

Ulcers usually form in areas of the body where the skin covers the bone with less tissue. Some examples are: the buttocks, heels, hips, ankles, back, behind the knees and back of the head.

### Causes

There are different causes for the production of pressure ulcers. The three main causes are:

- **Pressure:** Limited movements create pressure on parts of the body, creating a decrease in the speed of blood flow.
- **Friction:** Friction can occur when skin rubs against clothing or clothing against any piece of fabric or bedding causing injuries in different parts of the body.
- **Rubbing:** occurs when some part of the body moves in the opposite direction of a surface. For example, the sliding of the body when the bed is elevated.

### Care and treatment

Caring for pressure ulcers requires reducing pressure on the skin, caring for the wound, having pain control, preventing infection, and eating well.



## Prevention

Your doctor will prescribe the appropriate treatment for the ulcer, including the following:

- **Reduce pressure:** To reduce pressure, there is the strategy of repositioning (changing and turning the body frequently).
- **Use support surfaces:** Use pillows, a mattress, and a bed to help you lie down and/or sit in the best way to protect your skin.
- **Skin cleansing:** Wash the affected area with a gentle cleanser and pat dry. Also, clean open sores with water or saline solution when changing the dressing.
- **Bandage:** Apply a bandage to speed up the healing process and create a barrier against infection.
- **Remove damaged tissue:** Your doctor may remove damaged tissue so that the wound heals faster. This can be done by gently rinsing the wound with water and cutting the tissue.
- **Pain medicines:** Your doctor may prescribe pain medicines such as nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs and naproxen sodium to reduce pain.
- **Surgery:** If a pressure ulcer does not heal, your doctor will tell you that you need surgery to remove it.

Some recommendations to prevent pressure ulcers:



- Don't smoke.
- Exercise daily.
- Manage stress.
- Constantly change posture to avoid skin tension.
- Take good care of your skin.

## Social and Emotional Aspect

For tips, tools, and resources on how you and your family can cope with the emotional and physical concerns that arise during and after your treatment, please visit your primary doctor or call the following hotlines:

### Medical Advice Line

1-844-347-7801

TTY/TDD 1-844-347-7804

### APS Health

787-641-9133

## References

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es-es/diseases-conditions/bed-sores/symptoms-causes/syc-20355893>

<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/patientinstructions/000740.htm>

<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/patientinstructions/000741.htm>

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