

Let's Talk About...

Pressure Injuries

What are pressure injuries?

Pressure injuries are sometimes called pressure sores, bed sores, or pressure ulcers. They usually form where your child's bones are close to the surface of the skin.

For example:

- Behind the knees
- On the hips or back
- Ankles and heels
- Head, ears, and elbows

They can also form under common devices such as IVs, feeding tubes and respiratory equipment.

What causes pressure injuries?

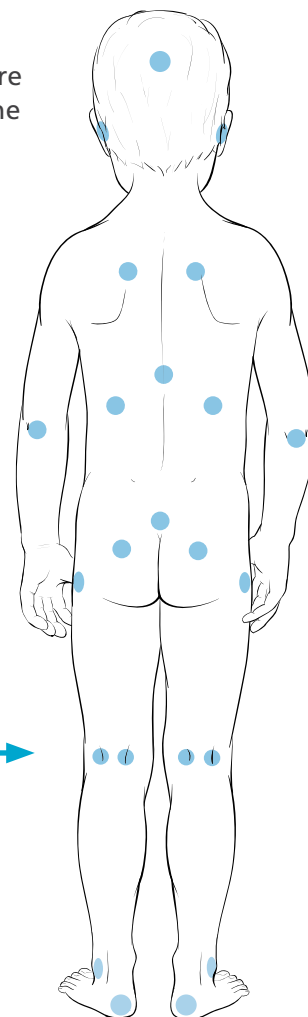
Pressure injuries are caused by pressure, friction, and shearing. This happens when your child is sitting or lying too long in the same position. They can also be caused by medical devices putting pressure on the skin for a long time.

- Pressure on your child's skin may stop the blood flow to the area and cause an injury. This can happen quickly with great pressure or over a long period of time with light pressure. A reddened area should go away within 30 minutes after the pressure is removed. If it doesn't, tell your child's healthcare provider about the problem before more skin is damaged.
- Friction causes pressure injuries when the skin is rubbed over bed linens or clothing. Wrinkles in sheets, shirts, or stockings may also cause friction.
- Shearing causes pressure injuries when the bony areas of the body (ankles, hips, tailbone, and others) are pressed into the soft tissues during movement. This can happen when a child slides down in bed.

When should I watch for pressure injuries?

Watch for pressure injuries if your child:

- Is not active or is lying in the same position for a long time
- Has an illness or disability that makes it hard to move around
- Has a lack of sensation or can't feel an area of the body
- Doesn't get enough nutrition or fluids
- Has too much moisture on their skin, like urine (pee), stool (poop), or sweat
- Has a bacterial skin infection
- Is in poor physical health
- Uses medical equipment that is in direct contact with the skin



Pressure sores can form where your child's bones are close to the skin.

How do I prevent pressure injuries?

- Change your child's position often. At first, check for redness as often as every 20 minutes or as long as every two hours. If you notice a red area anywhere, change your child's position more often.
- Make sure your child tells you when they are uncomfortable (if they are old enough to talk) so you can move them if needed.
- Use special mattress overlays and cushions. Do not use sheepskin or a doughnut cushion to relieve pressure.
- Put pillows between your child's ankles or knees to keep them from touching each other. Have your child get up and walk around if their healthcare provider says it's okay.
- Check your child's skin regularly and thoroughly. Look for red spots, blisters, or bruises.
- Wash your child's skin gently; scrubbing the skin causes friction. Pat your child's skin dry and apply lotion or cream. Moisturized skin is less likely to develop sores.
- Clean your child carefully after they pee or poop.
- Make sure your child eats healthy foods high in protein and drinks plenty of liquids.
- Talk to a physical therapist about activities your child can do.

How will my child's hospital care team help prevent pressure injuries?

To decrease your child's chance of getting a pressure injury, your child's care team will:

- Check your child's skin every shift.
- Look at the back of your child's head, bottom, heels, IV sites, and skin around medical devices when checking your child's skin.
- Put padding under tubes attached to your child, such as feeding tubes, urinary catheters, chest tubes, IV connections, and respiratory equipment.
- Keep your child's skin clean and dry.
- Apply lotion to your child's skin every day.
- Change your child's position every few hours.

When should I call my child's healthcare provider?

Call your child's healthcare provider if you notice:

- Any reddened area that does not fade within 30 minutes
- A blister, open area, scrape, draining wound, or black leathery area
- A hard lump of skin

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