

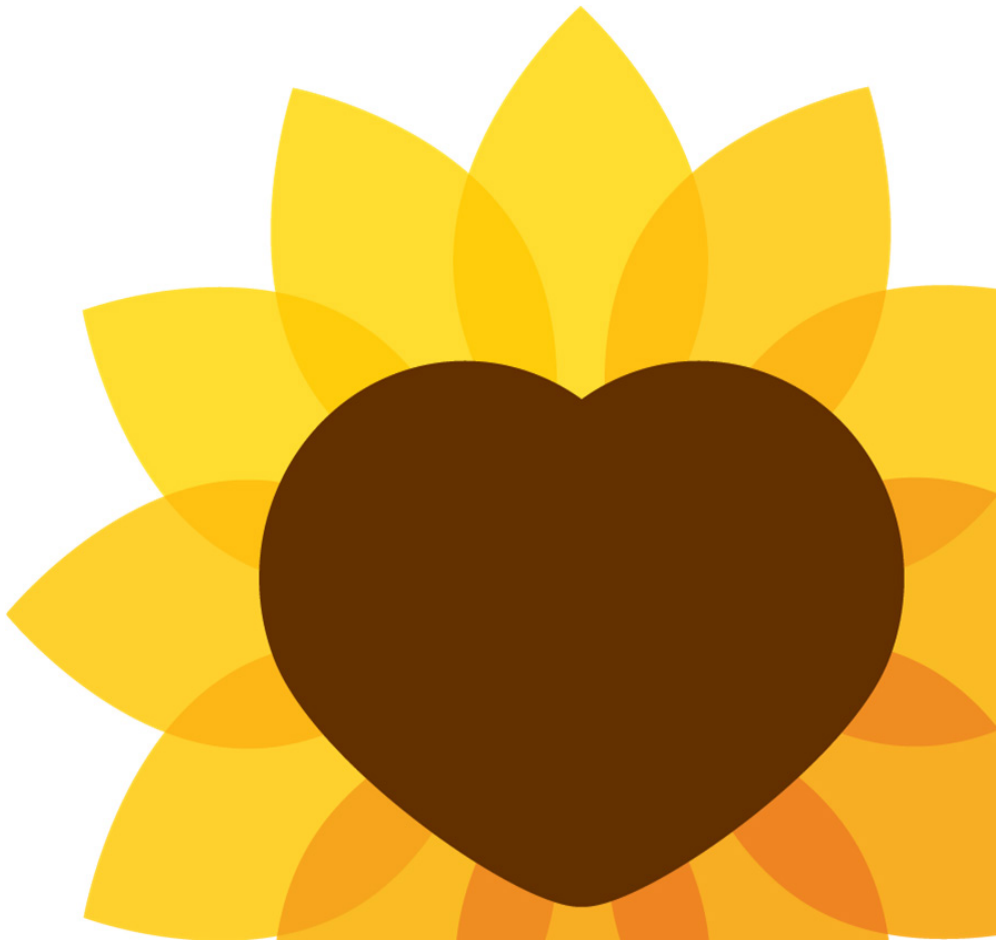


**East Cheshire  
Hospice**

*Where people come to live*

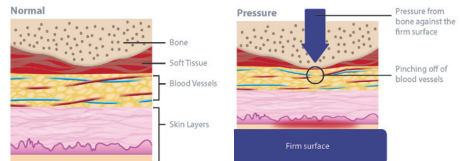
# Helping to prevent Pressure Ulcers

## A Guide for Patients



## What are Pressure Ulcers?

A pressure ulcer is an area of damaged skin caused by pressure that may otherwise be known as 'bed sores'.

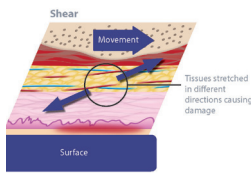


Pressure ulcers can happen by sitting or lying in one position for too long without moving, can develop when moving in bed or can be from a medical device that you are using for example: -

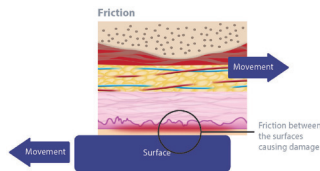
Oxygen masks  
or tubing

Neck collars

Splints



Shear – damaged skin  
from sliding off a chair



Friction – when heels or  
sacrum rub on mattress or  
sheets

If there is a constant pressure to an area of skin causing poor blood circulation, this leads to lack of oxygen and nutrients to the skin in that area, which can cause damage very quickly.

The skin will change colour, may feel sore, hard, numb, cool or warm which may be a sign that a pressure ulcer is developing.

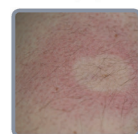
If you don't move or have difficulty in moving independently, you may develop changes to your skin such as red or purple areas that become painful, may be hard or may feel boggy, again these are the early signs of pressure damage.



Normal skin response to pressure, like your elbow when you lean on it.



Press finger over reddened area for 5 seconds, then lift finger.



If the area blanches, it is not a stage 1 pressure ulcer. If it stays red, it is a stage 1 pressure ulcer.

You have more chance of developing a pressure ulcer if:-

You spend a lot of time sitting or lying down

You have some incontinence

You have poor dietary intake

Your body does not have the right support when sitting or lying

You have increased risk with illnesses such as diabetes

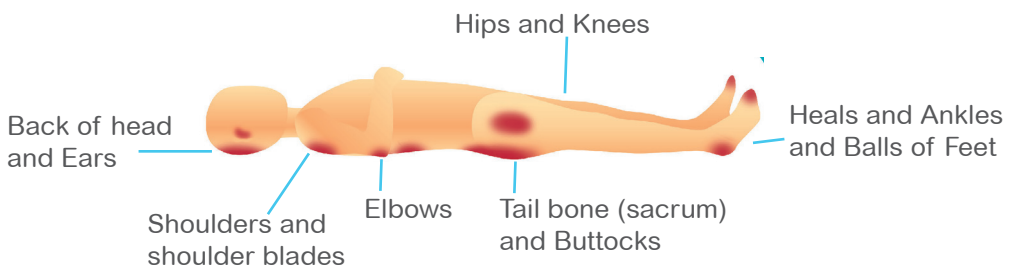
If you are self-caring with your needs but notice any of these changes yourself, please report them so we can advise and support you with pressure area care, whilst monitoring your areas of concern. When referred into a hospice service, the hospice staff will be vigilant in assessing your skin and will document and report any changes within your patient records.

A pressure ulcer can develop in a few hours. If it isn't treated quickly, it can develop into an open sore or blister and over a period of time can become deep and damage tissue extensively and they can take a long time to heal.

### Where are pressure ulcers likely to develop?

Usually on parts of the body which take your weight, where there is bone close to the surface. They can take a long time to heal and can be very painful, therefore staff at the hospice are trained to do all they can to stop these from developing.

Some of the areas most at risk, depending on which position you may lie or sit in, are:-



## Ways to prevent a pressure ulcer

A good way to remember is the ASSKING assessment. This stands for: -

A

A Risk Assessment

S

Skin Inspection

S

Surface

K

Keep Moving

I

Incontinence

N

Nutrition

G

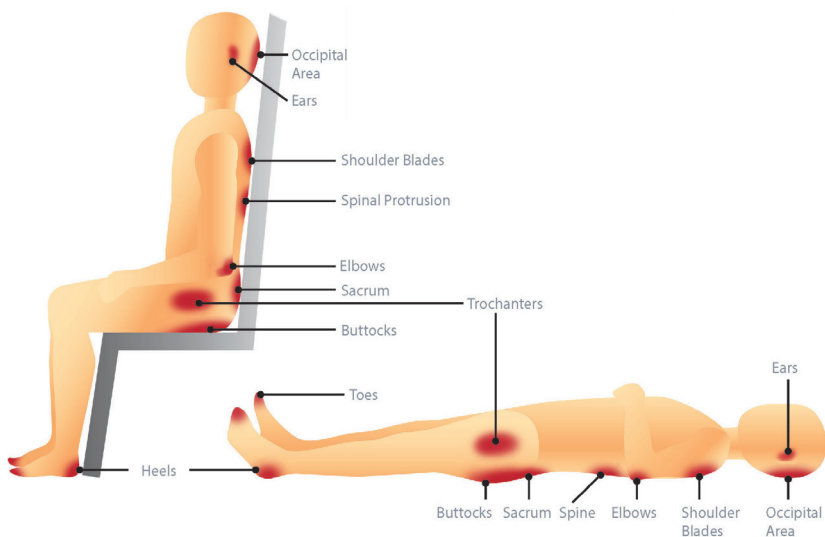
Give Information

## A Risk Assessment

This will be completed by a hospice nurse or district nurse. If you are at risk a care plan appropriate to your needs will be made with you.

## Skin Inspection

We ask that you check your skin regularly, and if you need help to do this our staff will include this in their plan of care for you daily. Try to move more often or allow our staff to help you with this if you find it difficult. Do not rub your skin as this can cause further damage and report any concerns you may have as soon as possible.



University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust, (2010).

## Surface

If you are assessed as being at risk, the staff will offer and provide you with special equipment, this can help prevent pressure damage occurring.

## Keep Moving

It is very important to stand and walk as much as possible or to roll or change position in the bed as often as you can to relieve the pressure. If you require help, the plan of care for you will involve regular pressure area care and assessment, allowing for support in repositioning and moving and mobilising regularly. Ensure footwear fits correctly to prevent skin damage, and to ensure your mobilising is as risk free as possible. If you chose not to move when you can this will put you at high risk of developing pressure ulcers and lead to possible serious infections.

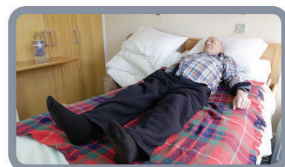
### Examples of 'Keep Moving':



Moving feet



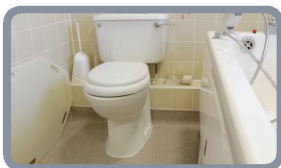
Transferring



Reclining



Encouraged to move independently



Regular toileting



Activity

### Incontinence

It is important to deal with any continence concerns as these can damage your skin if left untreated and put you at risk of your skin becoming sore, damp or chapped. The nursing team can help by providing barrier cream to protect your skin and maintain hygiene with using mild non perfumed cleaners to wash with.

### Nutrition

Plays a very important role in preventing pressure sores, your nutritional needs will be assessed by one of our Hospice team, and a plan will be discussed with you to ensure you have a good nutritional diet, and that you are drinking plenty of fluids.

### Give Information

It is important to understand the information you are given by our Hospice team, if you are unclear or have any questions, please ask. We are more than happy to go through things with you.

### One of the Hospice team will: -

Assess your skin on a regular basis in line with the plan of care agreed with you. We may need to look at parts of your body, which are personal to you. With your consent we will assess these areas, always maintaining dignity and respect, and offer advice if they feel your skin is at risk.

Our hospice staff may ask you to change position on a regular basis. If you find this difficult, we will be happy to assist you. If you are at home, your care givers will be supported and advised in the best way to assist you to reposition when staff are not available, this can be discussed when the Hospice @Home team visit you.

It will be beneficial to share this leaflet with your friends and family, to raise awareness on how to prevent pressure ulcers occurring.

You may require: -

### A Special Bed

Some have sides, which you can use to assist you to change position. Try and lift your heels off the mattress when moving up the bed to prevent damage.



### A Special Mattress

This will be filled with air by a pump at the bottom of the bed, or a specialised foam. These change pressure to help relieve the force on certain parts of your body.

### Cushions

These will help redistribute pressure to other areas when sitting in a chair.



Bad example



Good example

### Slide Sheets

These will be used by our staff to help change your position and reduce friction on the bed sheets.

Our team may also raise your heels off the bed if they are looking vulnerable, or use a pillow to put between your knees when lying on your side.

This leaflet has been produced using information provided by the NHS Trust, and will help inform you to make choices about your own care.



Notes:

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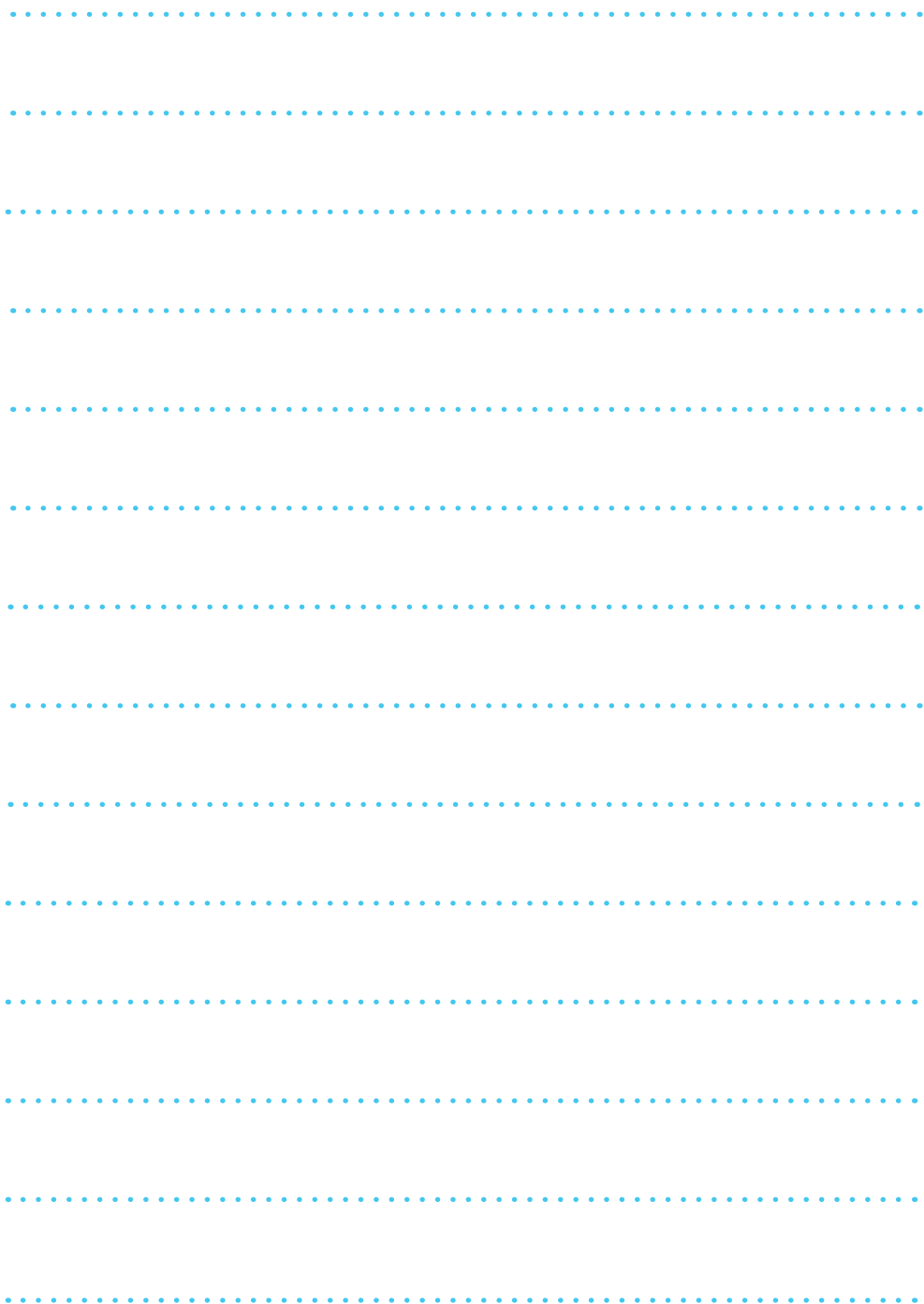
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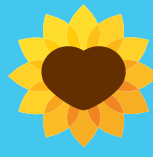
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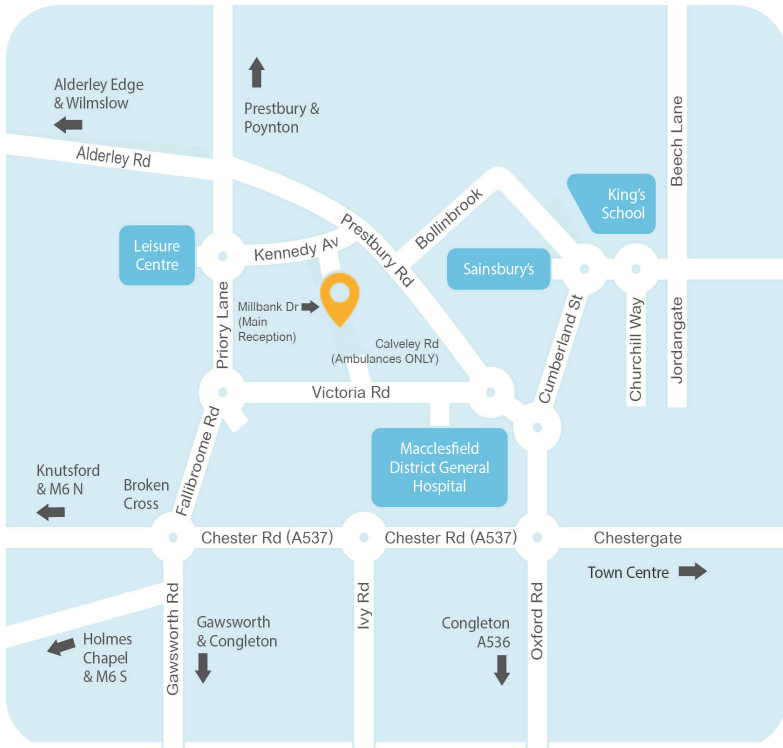
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**East Cheshire  
Hospice**

Where people come to live



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