

MY SAFE SKIN CHECKLIST

A Simple Guide to Understanding and Preventing Pressure Wounds & Ulcers

What is a Pressure Wound?

A **pressure wound** (also called a pressure ulcer or bedsore) is an injury to the skin and the soft tissue underneath it. It happens when constant pressure rubs or squeezes the skin against a bed or wheelchair, cutting off normal blood flow. Without blood, skin cells can become damaged or die very quickly.

Where do they happen? They usually form on parts of the body where your bones sit close to the skin surface, such as your **tailbone (sacrum), heels, hips, ankles, and elbows**.

Your Daily Skin Health Checklist

Use this everyday checklist to keep your skin healthy, comfortable, and fully protected from friction damage:



Check Your Skin Every Day

Look for any color changes. On lighter skin, look for red areas that do not turn white when pressed. On darker skin, look for purplish, bluish, or shiny dark patches. Use a mirror or ask a loved one to check hard-to-see areas like your back and heels.



Change Positions Frequently

If you spend a lot of time in bed, make sure to shift or change sides every **2 hours**. If you use a wheelchair, lift your weight or shift sides every **15 minutes** to give your skin a breath of fresh blood supply.



Float Your Heels

Heels are highly sensitive. When resting or sleeping on your back, place a soft pillow underneath your lower legs so your heels gently "float" in the air and do not press flat against the mattress.



Keep Skin Clean and Perfectly Dry

Wash gently with warm water and mild, fragrance-free soap. Pat your skin dry completely with a soft towel—never rub aggressively. Change damp clothing, linens, or protective garments right away to avoid trapping wet moisture against the skin.



Protect with a Moisture Barrier Cream

Apply a protective skin ointment or barrier cream (such as zinc oxide or petroleum jelly) to areas that frequently get wet or raw. This creates a safe shield against natural moisture breakdown.



Eat Protein and Stay Hydrated

Drinking plenty of water and eating protein-rich foods (like chicken, fish, eggs, beans, or dairy) feeds your body the building blocks it needs to keep your skin strong, thick, and resistant to tearing.



WHEN TO CALL YOUR NURSE OR DOCTOR RIGHT AWAY

Pressure wounds can worsen quickly. Call for medical support immediately if you notice:

- An area of skin stays bright red, purple, or dark, and does not fade after you stay off of it for a couple of hours.
- The skin breaks open, blisters, or forms an open scrape or deep sore.
- You notice warning signs of infection: increased pain, localized swelling, foul odors, yellow fluid, or if you develop a fever and body chills.

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Disclaimer: This printable checklist serves as an educational guide and does not replace medical diagnostics or specific care instructions from your healthcare physician or home nurse.