

Background

This quick reference guide summarises the recommendations made in:

- Pressure ulcer prevention: pressure ulcer risk assessment and prevention, including the use of pressure-relieving devices (beds, mattresses and overlays) for the prevention of pressure ulcers in primary and secondary care. *NICE Clinical Guideline No. 7.*
- The management of pressure ulcers in primary and secondary care.

It replaces the NICE version of pressure ulcer prevention. A document is available on our website which shows how each statement in this QRG links to the recommendations in the full guidelines (www.nice.org.uk/CG029).

Patient-centred care

Treatment and care should take into account patients' individual needs and preferences. Good communication is essential, supported by evidence-based information, to allow patients to reach informed decisions about their care. Carers and relatives should have the chance to be involved in discussions where appropriate.

Key priorities for implementation

The following recommendations are identified as priorities for implementation.

- Patients should receive an initial and ongoing risk assessment in the first episode of care (within 6 hours).
- The pressure ulcer grade should be recorded using the European Pressure Ulcer Advisory Panel Classification System (see Full version).
- Patients should receive an initial and ongoing pressure ulcer assessment. This should be supported by photography and/or tracings (ruler for calibration).
- All those who are vulnerable to pressure ulcers should as a minimum be placed on a high specification foam mattress.
- For patients undergoing surgery, as a minimum provision a high specification foam theatre mattress or other pressure redistributing surface should be used.
- All pressure ulcers graded 2 and above should be documented as a local clinical incident.
- Patients with a grade 1–2 pressure ulcer should:
 - as a minimum provision be placed on a high specification foam mattress/cushion with pressure-reducing properties
 - be closely observed for skin changes.
- Patients with a grade 3–4 pressure ulcer should as a minimum provision be placed on:
 - a high specification foam mattress with an alternating pressure overlay, or
 - a sophisticated continuous low pressure system (for example, low air loss, air flotation, viscous fluid).
- The optimum wound healing environment should be created by using modern dressings (for example, hydrocolloids, hydrogels, hydrofibres, foams, films, alginates, soft silicones).

Further information

Ordering information

You can download the following documents from www.nice.org.uk/CG029

- A quick reference guide (this document), which has been distributed to health professionals working in the NHS in England.
- Information for the public – a lay version produced for people at risk of pressure ulcers and those with pressure ulcers, their families and carers, and the public.
- The full guideline – all the recommendations, details of how they were developed, and summaries of the evidence on which they were based.

For printed copies of the quick reference guide or information for the public, phone the NHS Response Line on 0870 1555 455 and quote:

- N0912 (quick reference guide)
- N0913 (information for the public).

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N0912 70k 1P Sept 05

ISBN 1-84629-076-7

Review date

The process of reviewing the evidence is expected to begin 4 years after the date of issue of this guideline. Reviewing may begin before this if significant evidence that affects the guideline recommendations is identified. The updated guideline will be available within 2 years of the start of the review process.

This guidance is written in the following context

This guidance represents the view of the Institute, which was arrived at after careful consideration of the evidence available. Health professionals are expected to take it fully into account when exercising their clinical judgment. The guidance does not, however, override the individual responsibility of health professionals to make decisions appropriate to the circumstances of the individual patient, in consultation with the patient and/or guardian or carer.

Implementation tools

This guideline is supported by the following implementation tools available on our website.

- A national costing report.
- A slide set.

Quick reference guide

Issue date: September 2005

The prevention and treatment of pressure ulcers

NICE Clinical Guideline: quick reference guide – the prevention and treatment of pressure ulcers

