

Pressure ulcers

Information for the public

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About this information

NICE quality standards help to improve key areas of health or social care so that people are offered the best care available.

This information explains the care and support described in the NICE quality standard for pressure ulcers.

Pressure ulcers

The quality standard for pressure ulcers is made up of 8 statements that describe high-quality care for people with pressure ulcers. These statements set out the quality of care you should receive.

1. People admitted to hospital or a care home with nursing have their risk of developing a pressure ulcer assessed by a healthcare professional within 6 hours of being admitted.
2. People referred to community nursing services who have 1 or more risk factors for pressure ulcers have their risk of developing a pressure ulcer assessed at the first face-to-face visit.
3. People who have had an operation or investigation in hospital have an assessment afterwards to see if they are at risk of developing a pressure ulcer. People who are discharged from hospital, or who move wards while they are in hospital, have an assessment afterwards to see if they are at risk of developing a pressure ulcer.

4. People identified as at high risk of developing pressure ulcers are offered a skin assessment by a healthcare professional to check their skin for signs of pressure ulcers. The skin assessment should be carried out every time they are identified as high risk following an assessment or reassessment of pressure ulcer risk.
5. People who are at risk of developing pressure ulcers should receive advice about changing their position regularly, how changing position can help reduce the risk of developing a pressure ulcer, and how frequently they should change position (according to their individual risk of developing a pressure ulcer).
6. People at risk of developing pressure ulcers who are unable to reposition themselves are helped to change their position at a frequency that is appropriate for their level of risk, and according to their wishes and needs.
7. People who have a high risk of developing pressure ulcers are given information by a healthcare professional about preventing pressure ulcers from developing. This should be tailored to the person's needs, and should include advice about the causes and early signs of pressure ulcers, and information on how pressure ulcers can affect health and quality of life. The information should also include a demonstration of how to use any equipment (for example, any mattresses or cushions) that may be supplied, and information about what people can do to help prevent pressure ulcers from developing.
8. People who have a high risk of developing pressure ulcers are given 'pressure redistributing equipment'. This term is used to describe any item, such as a mattress or an overlay (a layer placed on top of a mattress), that either spreads out the pressure or removes pressure regularly from different parts of the body. (They may also be called 'pressure reducing', 'pressure relieving' or 'pressure redistributing devices'.) If you use a wheelchair or sit for long periods of time, you may also be offered a special cushion. Babies, children and young people at risk of developing a pressure ulcer on the back of the head should have a special pillow or pad.

Your care

Your health and social care team should explain any treatment, care or support you should be offered so that you can decide together what is best for you. NICE has also produced advice and quality standards on [improving the experience of care for adults using the NHS](#) which you might like to read.

We also have more information on the NICE website about [using health and social care services](#).

More information on pressure ulcers

NICE has also produced guidance (advice) on [pressure ulcers](#). The guidance was used to develop this quality standard.

Sources of advice and support for people with pressure ulcers, their families and carers

- Your Turn, www.your-turn.org.uk
- Spinal Injuries Association, 01908 604 191, www.spinal.co.uk

You can also go to [NHS Choices](#) for more information about health and social care.

A number of organisations who share NICE's commitment to improving quality in this area formally support this quality standard. They may also be able to provide advice and support. For a list of these organisations see the pressure ulcers quality standard [overview](#).

NICE is not responsible for the quality or accuracy of any information or advice provided by these organisations.

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Accreditation

