PRESSURE ULCERS / BEDSORES

PRESSURE ULCERS / BEDSORES: Open wounds that form when pressure is applied to the skin for long periods of time. The pressure causes blood flow to decrease and the skin tissue and sometimes tissues below the skin to die and peel off.

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

- SKIN DISCOLORATION (redness or black areas)
- BREAKS IN THE SKIN
- PAIN OR DISCOMFORT
- AREAS OF SKIN THAT ARE PEELING

RISK FACTORS (Alerts)

Recognition of the following conditions will help alert you to potential risks:
- Elderly/advanced age
- Individual cannot move without assistance
- Poor nutrition
- Poor fluid intake/dehydration
- Chronic disease (such as Diabetes)
- Infections
- Injuries
- Wearing braces or casts
- Limbs that are red and swollen with fluid (edema)
- Friction
- Moisture
- Poor circulation

SOME FACTS

- Bedsores are called pressure ulcers, decubitus, and/or pressure sores.
- These wounds form because pressure remains at points on the skin - especially over bony areas - cutting off the blood supply. The damaged flesh then dies and slowly peels away.
- Open bedsores can allow bacteria into the bloodstream causing serious infection.

WHAT TO DO • PREVENTION

- Identify and be aware of individuals with the above risks: check their skin for redness or discoloration.
- Individuals who spend long periods of time in bed should be moved from right-side to back to left-side on an every two (2) hours or more frequently as recommended for the individual.
- Reposition individuals in wheelchairs every thirty (30) minutes.
- Maintain good nutrition and fluid intake.
- Moisturize dry skin.
- Avoid vigorous or hard rubbing when bathing, drying, or applying lotion.
- Avoid dragging or pulling when moving individuals (avoid friction); lift them.
- Keep skin clean and dry; moist skin is more easily damaged.
WHAT TO DO

If you suspect a bedsore or pressure area?

- CALL THE DOCTOR for an appointment
  If the doctor finds a pressure ulcer or bedsore, orders may be written for the following:

  ✔ SKIN CARE:
  - Medications, creams, lotions, and/or dressings
  - Type & length of treatment
  - Wound clinic or wound specialty home health nurse (if needed)

  ✔ NUTRITION:
  - Tube feeding or special diet
  - Type, amount, and frequency of tube feeding or supplements
  - Special drinks, vitamins, or supplements

  ✔ EQUIPMENT & SUPPLIES:
  - Special cushions, boots, mattresses, and/or hospital bed
  - Feeding tubes, dressings, tape, creams/lotions, and other items as needed

- CALL THE DDD SUPPORT COORDINATOR & DISTRICT NURSE
  The District Nurse, in collaboration with Support Coordination, will assess risk factors and develop an intervention plan to heal the current pressure ulcer and prevent reoccurrence of new pressure ulcers.

EMERGENCY

Immediately call 9-1-1 when any of the following conditions occur:

- DIFFICULTY BREATHING
- LOSS OF CONSCIOUSNESS
- CHANGE IN ALERTNESS OR ABILITY TO PAY ATTENTION
- BLEEDING
- EXCESSIVE PAIN