## Why?

The aim of this guide is to provide up to date information regarding the risk of developing a pressure ulcer through sitting for long periods of time.

## The science bit

A pressure ulcer is an injury to the skin and/or underlying tissue usually over a bony prominence.

Sitting for long periods of time increases the risk of a pressure ulcer developing. This is due to soft tissue in the buttock area being squashed between the seat and the bony bits of the bottom, leading to skin damage. Some pressure ulcers develop quickly and others take longer, so it is important to know the risks.

## Useful resources

Tissue Viability Society tvs.org.uk

NHS Choices nhs.uk/pages/home.aspx

NICE Guidelines for the public (cg179 nice.org.uk/guidance/cg179

Love Great Skin lovegreatskin.co.uk

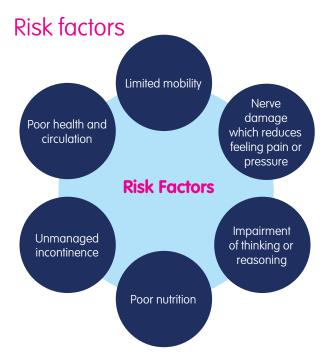
Stephens, M., and Bartley, C. (2017) Understanding the risk of pressure ulcers and sitting in adults: What does it mean to me and my carers? At a glance document to help you decide. Tissue Viability Society: Leeds.



Understanding the risk of pressure ulcers when sitting in adults What does it mean for me and my carers?

Seating guidelines for people, carers, health and social care professionals.

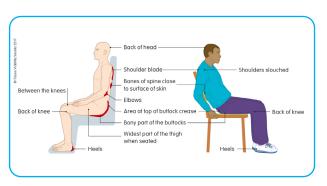




A useful test to assess risk can be found at this link reactforedskin.co.uk

Being aware of risk factors in sitting, will help to decide if you need to seek professional advice and equipment.

## Where do pressure ulcers develop when seated?



## Getting the right chair/ wheelchair

Essential factors that should be considered before choosing a chair:

Seat width

Seat height

Seat depth

Back rest

Leg rests

Foot plate

Head rest

Arm rests

## Who can help?

Getting the right chair/wheelchair can be complex. Trained individuals can carry out a comprehensive assessment of needs which includes the below:

#### The person

- Past medical history
- current health status (physical & mental)
- Pressure ulcer history/risk assessment
- Body size and proportions
- Ability to transfer/mobilise/ pressure relieve
- Level of independance
- Nutrition
- Medication
- Continence
- Opinion

#### The chair/cushion

- Type
- Size
- Hours to be spent in the chair
- Temperature and humidity when seated
- Interface Pressure Mapping
- · Function of the chair
- Additional supports
- Material
- Durability

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#### Other

- Adjustability of the chair
  Risk assess
- Manoeuvrability
- Easy to maintain and clean

Carer

- Ability to position person in the chair
- Opinion

- Risk assessment: environment, person and carer
- What is the chair to be used for?
- Environmental aspects: size of the room, doorway width, room temperature
- Motivation to use the chair
- Occupations
- · Aesthetics (look of the chair)
- Cost

# Self-help suggestions

## Six actions to reduce risk:

#### 1. Skin

inspect 'at risk areas' regularly throughout the day. Use the blanch test reacttoredskin.co.uk

#### 2. Surface

Getting the right seating equipment and using it correctly.

### 3. Keep moving

Change position at regular intervals.

#### 4. Incontinence

Advice can be sought on the use of appropriate creams, pads, pants and other equipment from your GP/Practice Nurse.

#### 5. Nutrition

A well-balanced diet and fluid intake is essential. See nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/ Pages/the-eatwell-guide.aspx

#### 6. Sickness

It is important to maintain a healthy lifestyle as becoming generally unwell increases the chance of developing a pressure ulcer.

#### ALERT

- Equipment such as hoist slings, catheter, leg bags and belts can increase risk if used inappropriately.
- Footstools should not be used.