

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](http://tvs.org.uk)
tvs.org.uk

[NHS Choices](http://nhs.uk/pages/home.aspx)
nhs.uk/pages/home.aspx

[NICE Guidelines for the public \(cg179\)](http://nice.org.uk/guidance/cg179)
nice.org.uk/guidance/cg179

[Love Great Skin](http://lovegreatskin.co.uk)
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.



Each year 700,000 people are affected, costing the NHS £3.8 million per day



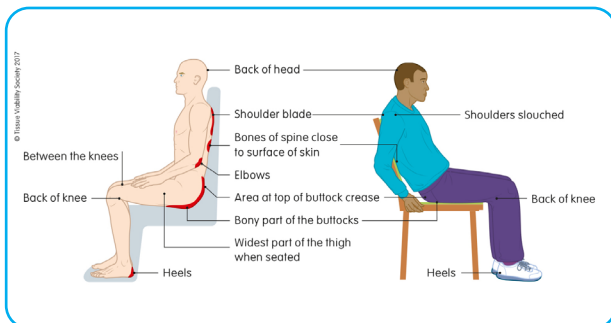
Risk factors



A useful test to assess risk can be found at this link reactoredskin.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:



Self-help suggestions

Six actions to reduce risk:

- Skin**
inspect 'at risk areas' regularly throughout the day. Use the blanch test reactoredskin.co.uk
- Surface**
Getting the right seating equipment and using it correctly.
- Keep moving**
Change position at regular intervals.
- Incontinence**
Advice can be sought on the use of appropriate creams, pads, pants and other equipment from your GP/Practice Nurse.
- Nutrition**
A well-balanced diet and fluid intake is essential. See nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/the-eatwell-guide.aspx
- 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.