

After you have your baby

Having an epidural or caesarean section will increase your risk of developing a pressure ulcer. It is therefore important that you:

- Change position frequently.
- Get out of bed and mobilise as soon as sensation returns.
- Ensure that your catheter tubing goes over your leg and that you are not lying on it.
- Eat and drink frequently.

It is important to note that not every woman will develop a pressure ulcer and staff will do their utmost to help prevent them.

Your cooperation is vital in the prevention of pressure ulcers.



<http://pha.site/caras-story>



www.nhs.uk/conditions/pressure-sores

If you would like to give feedback on any of our services please discuss with your midwife.



Public Health Agency
12-22 Linenhall Street, Belfast BT2 8BS.
Tel: 0300 555 0114 (local rate).
www.publichealth.hscni.net

Find us on:



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Looking after your skin

A maternity information leaflet on prevention of pressure ulcers in labour and the postnatal period

What is a pressure ulcer?

A pressure ulcer is damage that occurs on the skin and underlying tissue due to a lack of blood and oxygen supply.

This may happen due to:

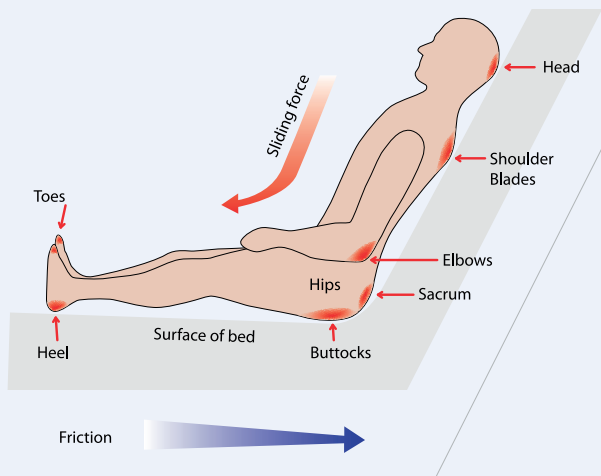
Pressure - the weight of the body pressing down on the skin.

Shear - this occurs if the skin slides over another surface.

Friction - rubbing of the skin.

Moisture - any prolonged contact with fluid – urine, amniotic fluid.

The most common places for pressure ulcers to occur are over bony prominences, (bones close to the skin) like the bottom, heel, hip, elbow, ankle, shoulder, back and the back of the head.



Trigger factors that can lead to pressure ulcers during your hospital stay

- **Oedema** - swelling of the hands, feet and legs.
- **Immobility** - being unable to get up and move freely due to epidural or post caesarean section. Some types of pain relief can make it difficult for you to feel or tell us if an area of skin is becoming sore.
- **Moisture** - when your waters break or if you are sitting in or lying on wet sheets.
- **Restlessness in bed** - can cause friction of the skin.
- **Pressure** - from lying or sitting in the same position for long periods of time.
- **Devices** - certain medical devices can lead to a higher risk of developing a pressure ulcer due to immobility or fear of moving - such as catheters.

What are the warning signs?

- Red patches on fair skin.
- Purple/bluish patches on dark skin.
- Swelling and blisters.
- Hard or swollen areas which may be painful.

Please let your midwife know at once if you feel that you may have any of the above so that it can be inspected and closely monitored.

You can help reduce your risk by

- Changing your position regularly - at least every two hours in labour or every hour if you have an epidural. Ask your midwife for help if you find this difficult.
- Keeping as mobile as possible.
- Changing wet pads/sheets regularly.

Your midwife will help you by

- Assessing your risk on arrival to the ward and if your risk changes during labour – for example if you have an epidural or caesarean section.
- Encouraging and helping you to change position regularly.
- Changing wet sheets/pads frequently.
- Encouraging you to stay mobile.
- Observing your at-risk areas.

