



Pressure Ulcers (Bedsore)

A Simple Guide for Families

What is a Pressure Ulcer?

A pressure ulcer (bedsore) is skin breakdown from staying in one position too long.

Common areas: heels, tailbone, hips, elbows, shoulder blades, back of head, ankles.

What they look like: redness/dark patches, firm or mushy skin, blisters, open areas, or black tissue.

How to Help Prevent Pressure Ulcers

Reposition Regularly

- Turn every 2 hours, if comfortable
- Use pillows to support back, hips, knees, ankles
- If turning causes pain → move less often; comfort first

Protect the Heels

- “Float” heels by placing pillow under calves
- Heel boots/foam protectors if available

Keep Skin Dry

- Change wet briefs/pads quickly
- Pat skin dry
- Use barrier cream
- Avoid scented lotions or powders

Soft Surfaces

- Foam wedges
- Extra pillows
- Smooth, wrinkle-free sheets
- Pressure-relief mattress if provided

Reduce Friction

- Lift using a draw sheet — don't drag
- Keep socks on to prevent rubbing

How to Care for a Pressure Ulcer

Every wound is different, Your Hospice team will give you individual instructions.

My Instructions:

1. Clean with: _____
2. Pat dry — do not rub
3. Apply: _____
4. Cover with: _____
5. Replace every: _____ or if wet, soiled, or loose

Keep Pressure Off

- Do not lie directly on the sore
- Use pillows/wedges to offload the area

If You See Black Tissue (Eschar)

- Do NOT remove it
- Keep clean and dry
- Leave open to air or lightly dressed as directed

Pain Control

- Many pressure ulcers hurt
- Give morphine or comfort meds before turning or dressing changes

When to Call Your Hospice Nurse

- Sudden increase in pain
- Rapidly spreading redness
- New foul odor
- Heavy drainage
- Dressing keeps coming off
- Any change you're unsure about

Remember:

In hospice, the goal is comfort, not healing.