

Resource for Newly Identified Skin Concerns

Caregiver or Staff Instructions if a Skin Change is Observed

- Document **description** of skin changes: Location, color, approximate size, temperature, texture [firm or soft], and sensation [when able].
- Contact Healthcare Provider** for evaluation, diagnosis of skin change, and any additional orders.

Why This Matters

Individuals with identified skin changes should receive evidence-based interventions to prevent further injury and potential development of sepsis related to a pressure injury (PI).

Who Can Identify and Stage a PI?

Pressure injury staging requires an understanding of the skin and tissue anatomy. Determining the difference between PIs from other wounds requires one of the following healthcare providers' credentials: Registered Nurse, Physician, and/or Board-Certified Wound Specialist.¹

Immediate Interventions for Skin Concerns

<u>Location of Skin Concern</u>	<u>Recommended Interventions</u>
Back/Bottom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To position Individual on their side, place pillow(s) or foam wedge(s)* behind back, and pillow between legs. (Goal: tailbone does not touch bed)³ When in a seated position, support with repositioning (weight shifting [tilt & recline]), moving (lean right, left, & forward), and standing, per Individual goals, as tolerated² Use fabrics that slide easily to reduce friction (avoid wool & cotton)¹ Minimize layers of bedding and incontinence padding (use less than 3 layers when possible)³ Decrease time spent sitting on toilet, bed pan, or commode²
Heels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make sure heels are not touching the bed or any surface: Place pillow underneath the leg between knee and ankle¹ Make sure heels are not touching the bed when wearing heel protection boots*: Place pillow underneath the leg between knee and ankle¹
Back of Head	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reposition head with each turn
Ears	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure ear is not touching surfaces (pillow, chair, bed, durable medical equipment)
<p><u>Avoid use of the following interventions because they may cause harm:</u></p> <p>Ring or doughnut shaped cushions^{2,3}</p> <p>Using more than one adult incontinence undergarment on at a time (do not layer)</p> <p>Covering cushions with pillowcases, pads, and incontinence liners²</p>	

¹NPIAP Quick Reference Guide 4th ed ²NPIAP Clinical Practice Guidelines (Seated Individual) ³NPIAP Frequently Asked Questions

*May require Healthcare Provider order

Questions to Ask the Healthcare Provider When Seen for New Skin Concern

- Is evaluation by a Wound Specialist or Dietitian needed?
- Are orders for additional interventions or durable medical equipment (DME) needed?

Takeaway

When a skin issue is identified, implement the above strategies and have an HCP evaluate the individual receiving care ASAP. **If a skin concern appears to worsen before being seen by a Healthcare Provider, go to urgent care or the emergency department.**