

## MANAGEMENT/PREVENTION OF PRESSURE ULCERS

Prevention is the key to the management of pressure ulcers. Risk factor reduction must be a component of managing and treating existing ulcers and preventing them whenever possible.

### APPLIES TO

- Registered Nurses
- Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurses
- Therapists
- Other (Identify): \_\_\_\_\_

### THE BRADEN SCALE

Commonly used tool in predicting ulcer risk. Six areas are evaluated to determine risk using a numeric scale. The lower the score the higher the risk. The areas are:

- Sensory perception: the ability to respond to pressure related discomfort - high risk paraplegics or quadriplegics with no sensation.
- Moisture: the degree to which the skin area is exposed to moisture. (incontinent clients).
- Activity: degree of physical activity - the less active the higher the risk.
- Mobility: ability to change and control body position.
- Nutrition: note usual food and intake pattern.
- Friction and shear: ability to assist with management or be moved in a way that prevents contact with bedding or other surfaces.

### IDENTIFYING RISK FACTORS AND IMPLEMENTING PREVENTION MEASURES

- Turn and position every one to two hours.
- Use pressure reducing devices such as cushions, mattresses etc.

- Range of motion exercises to relieve pressure and improve circulation.
- Lift rather than slide (body or body part).
- Avoid positions with direct weight on bony prominences.
- Adjust or pad appliances, casts, splints, etc.
- Avoid increased pressure.
- Avoid heat lamps and harsh soaps.
- Individualize bathing routines - dry skin is more susceptible.  
Use lotions keep skin moist.
- Nutrition is important to prevention and to healing - evaluate and use other disciplines as necessary.
- Manage the incontinent client - keep dry and use protective moisture barriers.
- Avoid heel and elbow protectors that fasten with single strap as they can affect movement and circulation.
- Avoid artificial sheepskin as it does not decrease pressure.

**RELATED PROCEDURES**

None.