

HEALTHY SKIN

OUR COMMITMENT TO SKIN SAFETY

As a patient at Lakewood Health System, we will help keep your skin healthy by:

- Providing you and your caregivers with information on skin safety.
- Our on-staff wound care nurse specialist is available to answer questions and provide care. If you have skin breakdown, ask your healthcare provider about a referral.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Physician: _____
 Wound/Ostomy Nurse: _____
 Diabetes Educator: _____
 Dietitian: _____
 Physical Therapist: _____
 Pharmacy: _____
 Medical Supplier: _____

IMPORTANT E-MAILS

Ask your nurse for more information about Healthy Skin:

- Nutrition and Fluids.
- Foot Care Tips for Diabetes.



218-894-1515
 49725 COUNTY 83 • STAPLES, MN

HEALTHY SKIN



HELP US PROTECT YOUR SKIN

Your skin is the largest body organ. It protects you, helps maintain your fluid balance and body temperature and is a key part of your immune system. Taking proper care of your skin includes eating a balanced diet and drinking plenty of fluids. Risk of injury to the skin increases with age due to thinning of the skin and decreased elasticity.

In general, tips to remember:

- Maintain proper food and fluid intake unless your diet is restricted. Consider a consultation with our dietitian.
- Change your position in bed at least every one to two hours; ask your caregiver if you need help. Shift your weight every 15-30 minutes when sitting.
- Reduce friction when moving in bed. Don't pull or drag yourself across the sheets or use your heels. Avoid rubbing or massaging skin over the bony areas, and repetitive movements, like scratching your foot by rubbing it on the sheets.
- If you have pain on your heels or buttocks, tell your caregiver. Pain may mean you have too much pressure on the skin. Don't use doughnut-shaped cushions that can damage the tissues under the skin.





HEALTHY SKIN

WHAT IS A PRESSURE ULCER?

A pressure ulcer, once called a "bedsore," is an injury to the skin and underlying tissue. This is caused by unrelieved pressure that keeps the skin from getting the oxygen and nutrients that it needs to stay healthy.

These ulcers usually occur on parts of the body that sustain pressure from lying in bed or sitting for long periods of time, like hips, buttocks and heels. Pressure ulcers begin as reddened areas, but can damage skin and muscles if not treated promptly.

Pressure ulcers are serious problems and can lead to pain, slower recovery from health problems and may lead to infection. There are many causes for pressure ulcers. Your risk increases if you:

- Are unable to move or change positions.
- Lose control of bowel or bladder.
- Slide down in a bed or chair.
- Rub or create friction on the skin.
- Don't get enough nutrients or fluids.
- Have poor circulation or fragile skin.
- Have problems thinking clearly.
- Have problems feeling pressure or pain

PREVENTING PRESSURE ULCERS

Knowing how to help your care team prevent pressure ulcers is an important part of your care. Here are some things you can do:

- Be active in your healthcare.
- Involve your family and caregivers.
- Ask questions. Be sure you know what is being done and why.
- Explain your needs, wants and concerns.
- Learn what is best for you.



If you are bed-ridden for long periods of time:

- Keep the head of your bed as low as you can. If you need to raise it, raise it to the lowest point possible for a short period of time (30 degree angle or less).
- Use pillows to keep your knees and ankles from touching each other and to keep your heels off the bed. Place pillows under your legs from mid-calf to ankle, never under the knee. Use elbow pads for protection.
- Avoid lying directly on your hipbone when on your side. Use a pillow to tilt 30 degrees to the side to avoid lying on a bony prominence.
- Your caregiver may use a lift sheet to help you change positions and prevent friction when moving up in bed.
- If you cannot turn easily, ask your care team if you need a special mattress or mattress overlay to lessen the pressure.
- Use a foot cradle to prevent pressure from bed linens on your toes.

If you have problems with bladder or bowel control:

- Only use pads made for incontinence (that pull moisture away).
- Protect your skin. Keep your skin clean and dry. Bathe every other day. Don't rub or massage the skin over the bony parts of your body. Clean your skin with a pH balanced cleansing product.
- Use a special cream or ointment to protect your skin from urine and stool. Ask your care team for suggestions.

If you are often in a chair or wheelchair:

- Remember that comfort and good posture are important.
- Change positions often and spend time out of the chair.
- Ask your care team if you need a special chair cushion.

WOUND CARE/OSTOMY NURSE

If you have questions or concerns, our on-staff Wound Care/Ostomy nurse is available to answer questions and provide care to help you maintain healthy skin.