

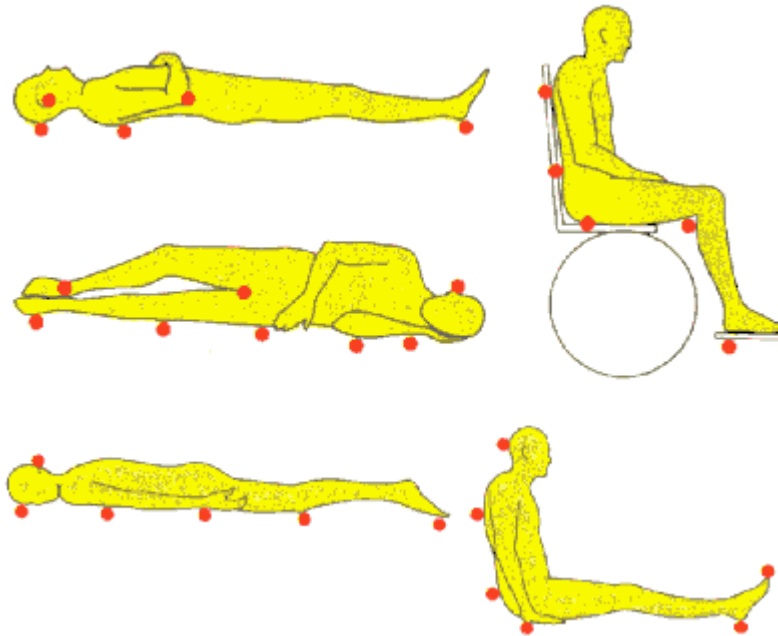


Pressure Ulcers Can Be a Sign of Elder Abuse

Pressure ulcers are areas of injured skin and tissue. Pressure ulcers are also called bed sores, pressure sores and decubitus ulcers. They are usually caused by sitting or lying in one position for too long. This immobility puts pressure on certain areas of the body. The pressure can reduce the blood supply to the skin and the tissues under the skin. When a change in position doesn't occur often enough and the blood supply gets too low, a pressure ulcer may form.

This injured skin condition can become so severe that the bone actually becomes exposed, increasing the risk of infection. Pressure ulcers are extremely hazardous and can be life threatening. Pressure ulcers are a telling sign of neglect or elder abuse. It is often an indicator a person has been immobilized for longer than is healthy.

Ulcer Sites



Hazards of Immobility

The body works like a well oiled machine. When all the parts of the machine are maintained properly, the machine will work. When any one part or combinations of parts are not maintained, the machine will decline rapidly, until one day it just can't function any more.

And so it is, with our own body. The body works together with the nervous, muscular, skeletal, digestive, respiratory, cardiovascular systems. All of these systems are enclosed by our skin. Together, all these "parts" make it possible for us to live and breathe and move around on this earth. The body was built to move. Our bones, joints and muscles need to be active so that every tissue in the body gets nourished regularly.

Inactivity, or not moving the body, can cause visible changes to our body within 3-5 days! That isn't long. When the body is allowed to remain inactive, the body will suffer consequences.

How to Prevent Pressure Sores

Inactivity or immobility can cause a rapid decline in health. It can even cause death. It is a very serious condition. There are many things that can be done to prevent pressure ulcers from ever happening.

- **Stay Active:** Change body positions constantly throughout the day and night. Keep the joints and muscles moving by staying physically active. Be sure to move the feet, toes, hips and knees regularly so skin pressure does not happen on the bony part of these joints.
- **Avoid sitting or lying still for more than two hours at a time.** Stand and walk as often as possible.
- **Drink plenty of water.** This helps digestion, circulation, bowel movements, the bladder, and the skin.
- **Eat nutritious foods** rich in fruits and vegetables, and include all food groups.
- **Keep skin dry.**
- **Inspect skin regularly to look for pink or reddened areas.**

Resources:

<http://www.ahrq.gov/consumer/#sore>

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/bv.fcgi?rid=hstat2.chapter.9527>