



“Lighting the way with better patient care.”

Anova
HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

Home Health · Hospice · Palliative · Home Care

HOSPICE PATIENT AND FAMILY EDUCATION AND TRAINING

PRESSURE ULCER PREVENTION

Skin care at end of life includes keeping the skin both clean and intact. The goals of providing good skin care are to reduce discomfort, prevent pressure ulcers, manage odor and drainage and to help the patient remain as active as possible.

What are Pressure Ulcers?

A pressure ulcer (or bedsore) is a breakdown of tissue by unrelieved pressure to the skin. The areas of the body that receive the greatest amount of pressure to the skin are called pressure points such as the tailbone, elbows, knees, heels, head, and buttocks. The skin begins to breakdown when blood flow is restricted at these pressure points. Inadequate nutrition, patient's inability to feel parts of their body or from rubbing against bed linens contribute to the development of pressure ulcers. Pressure ulcers often begin with areas of redness that do not go away. Pressure ulcers can be painful and difficult to treat. The best treatment is prevention.

What can be done?

- Check the skin frequently including pressure points and report any changes to the hospice/palliative care team. Bath time is a good opportunity to observe the skin and pressure points.
- Follow up on the patient's reports of burning, pain, numbness or tingling of the skin and report to the hospice/palliative care team.
- Keep the skin clean and dry by changing absorbing pads frequently
- Use mild soaps and emollients sparingly
- Avoid using hot or cold water on the skin.
- Do not allow the patient to sit or lie directly on a pressure ulcer
- To help promote circulation, have the patient wiggle toes and move arms and legs often.
- If the patient is unable to move, you or a family caregiver may reposition every two hours to promote comfort and reduce the risk of pressure spots.
- Range of motion exercises of the joints and muscles should be done daily unless prohibited by the doctor
- Never use a heat lamp
- Do not massage pressure points or reddened areas
- Notify the team nurse if splints, braces or oxygen tubing are rubbing or causing irritation.
- Clothing made of cotton and loose fitting tends to be more comfortable.
- Keep bed linens clean, dry and without wrinkles
- Avoid using plastic sheets as they may cause skin to breakdown
- Remove the bedpan within a few minutes to avoid pressure on the tailbone
- Many odors can be controlled – check with your nurse for methods of controlling odor.
- Always follow the treatment plan. Don't treat the wound yourself.
- Remember: always document (if applicable) and report your observations to the team.

Anova Health Care System

Tel: (412) 681-1044 **Fax:** (412) 681-8380

Email: info@anovahomehealth.com

Website: www.AnovaHomeHealth.com