

The Added Pressure of Surgery: Preventing Pressure Sores After Your Child's Surgery

What is a pressure sore?

A pressure sore is a breakdown of skin due to pressure.
It usually starts as a red area that does not go away.

Why do Pressure Sores happen?

Your child may develop pressure sores after surgery for a number of different reasons:

- Your child has decreased movement while wearing casts and splints both in bed and in wheelchair
- Your child is sitting in a different position in his or her wheelchair (legs raised may put more pressure on bottom)
- Your child may not have the right nutrients in his or her diet for sore healing
- Your child's skin is under pressure from a cast or splints
- Your child's bottom is slipping on bed or in wheelchair
- Your child has moisture on his or her skin (e.g. sweating or damp diaper/pad)

Where do Pressure Sores Happen?

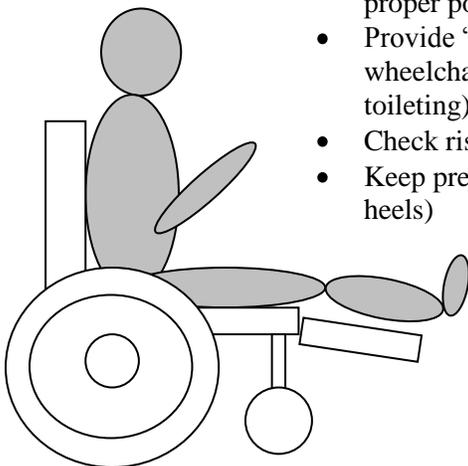
Common areas to watch out for include (but not limited to):

1. Bottom (tailbone and "sit bones")
2. Top of cast or splint under back of thighs
3. Bottom of cast or splints under heel cord
4. Heels

Check these areas when toileting your child.

How to Prevent Pressure Sores

- Reposition your child in bed frequently (every two hours in the day), alternate their position from side to side, using pillows to help support them.
- Make sure your child is well supported in their wheelchair with no gaps between the wheelchair and the cast or splint (Occupational Therapist can show you proper positioning).
- Provide "pressure breaks" from the wheelchair by removing your child from the wheelchair at least every two hours, preferably for at least ½ hour (may be for toileting)
- Check risk areas (i.e. bottom and heels) when toileting.
- Keep pressure off heels by propping a rolled towel under the leg (but not the heels)



Phone a member from your child's health care team (physician, occupational therapist or nurse...) as soon as possible if you recognize a red area on your child's skin that does not go away!