

Our Amazing Skin: Let's Protect It



The **skin** is our body's largest organ and our first line of defense against the onslaughts of the external world. It is truly our best bandage and protector, and seeks to heal on its own when provided the right environment.

At Cloud 9 Care, we want to help you take every measure possible to care for the skin and maintain its protective qualities by providing a healthy surface that minimizes friction, shear, and pressure, all of which contribute to the formation of pressure sores.

Our amazing skin comprises about 16% of the total weight of the human body. Its most important physiological function is protection against various forms of harmful stimuli including physical and chemical trauma, microorganisms and radiation. The outermost layer is the epidermis, which provides a waterproof barrier, as well as contributing to skin tone. It is made up of an intricate network which serves as the body's initial barrier against pathogens, UV light, chemicals, and mechanical injury.

Here are some ways you can help your client prevent or heal pressure sores:

- 1) Change client's position every 2-3 hours, or as often as possible.
- 2) Keep a close eye on high-risk areas that are most likely to show signs and symptoms of pressure injury (bedsores). Be aware of reddened areas that don't blanch (turn white when pressed with light finger pressure), as well as breaks or tears in the skin. The most common areas are bony prominences such as the base of the skull, heels, tailbone, hip bones, shoulder blades, the back of ears and along the spine.
- 3) Apply lotion to maintain hydration and elasticity. This will help prevent dryness, which can lead to cracks and the potential for infection. Gentle massage with application can also promote healing circulation. Blood flow is vital to skin protection.
- 4) It can be helpful to use a pillow to elevate heels/ankles to prevent pressure on these areas. The adjacent pocket may be helpful for this purpose.
- 5) Ensure adequate nutrition and hydration. This strengthens the skin's integrity, providing further prevention of skin breakdown.
- 6) Provide soft bedding, using either an air mattress and/or memory or gel foam mattress layer.
- 7) Encourage gentle movement when possible, to increase circulation (e.g.: flexing the ankles, raising and lowering the arms).
- 8) Please contact your local physician or nurse if an area is red, or otherwise discolored and not blanching, or with any other concerns.

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How Cloud9 Care helps prevent pressure sores:

- 1) Provides a smooth wrinkle-free surface to decrease shear
- 2) Low-friction, moisture-wicking fabric close to skin
- 3) Designed to hold wedges in place, thereby maintaining therapeutic position, minimizing pressure on vulnerable areas
- 4) Eases care for the caregiver by maintaining position of inserts, and patient position
- 5) Wedges covered in low-friction fabric, which assists with ease of placement