Tissue Viability

The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust

Looking after your skin in Labour and the Postnatal Period

Maternity

To be issued to patients in addition to the aSSKINg leaflet.

The prevention of infection is a major priority in all healthcare and everyone has a part to play.

- **Please decontaminate your hands frequently for 20 seconds using soap and water or alcohol gel if available**
- **If you have symptoms of diarrhoea and/or vomiting, cough or other respiratory symptoms, a temperature or any loss of taste or smell please do not visit the hospital or any other care facility and seek advice from 111**
- **Keep the environment clean and tidy**
- **Let's work together to keep infections out of our hospitals and care homes.**

Safe & Effective | Kind & Caring | Exceeding Expectation

Introduction

You will soon be focusing on the arrival of your baby. This leaflet provides you with information to help protect your skin in labour and the postnatal period from damage / pressure ulcers.

What is a pressure ulcer?

A pressure ulcer can affect anyone of any age. It is a localised injury to the skin and / or underlying tissue, usually over a bony area. Damage results from pressure over time and dragging or rubbing of the skin.

Pressure ulcers can be painful and might mean you need to stay in hospital for longer.

What causes pressure ulcers?

There are various pressure points on the body including the back of the heels, shoulders, back of spine, buttocks (most common), toes, elbows and ears.

When the weight of the body is focused on one area, blood supply is limited and skin can be easily damaged.

The risk of pressure ulcers increases with:

- **Limited mobility:** When you can't move as much or being in the same sitting or lying positions for a long time
- **Shearing:** when skin drags over another surface, such as a bed sheet
- **Friction:** rubbing to the skin
- **Moisture:** damp skin from sweat, your waters (once broken) and blood loss

How can this affect you in labour?

- Pressure can come from sitting or lying in one position for a long time
- Restlessness in bed can result in friction or shearing (dragging) of the skin
- Having an epidural or spinal for pain relief can make it harder for you to tell if an area is becoming sore. It can also make it difficult for you to move
- Moisture can occur when your waters break
- If you require a drip in labour or a urinary catheter these tubes might stop you moving around

How can this affect you once your baby is born?

Recovering from an epidural or spinal will limit your ability to walk for a while once your baby has been born.

Especially after a caesarean section, it might be harder to tell if you are sore or requiring a pad change.

Pain can also stop you from wanting to move about as much.

You can help by:

- Keeping as mobile as possible before and during labour and after the birth of your baby
- If you have an epidural whilst you are in labour it is important to move at least every 2 hours. These don't need to be big movements, changing the position of the bed or a slight tilt to the side will make a difference
- Change pads regularly to reduce the moisture risk. Your midwife can support you with this and may encourage you if you have less sensation
- Following your birth, move about as soon as it's safe to do so to ease pressure and encourage blood flow, even if you have a urinary catheter in place. Your midwife can help you with this
- Make sure you drink plenty and eat well.

Your midwife will help by:

- Checking your skin regularly to see if you are at risk of developing a pressure ulcer and advise you if your skin changes
- Encourage and support you to move about and/or change position
- Help you to change your pads and change your bedding regularly during labour and after the birth of your baby
- Prevent damage caused by skin contact with your waters or blood loss by offering a barrier cream. If you need support to apply the barrier cream, ask the midwife to apply it as you may not be able to reach the area
- If you have a urinary catheter, your midwife will check that you are not sitting on the tube which can cause pressure damage over a long period of time

Am I likely to get a pressure ulcer?

If you aren't able to move as much as usual, changing position regularly and looking after your skin will help us to help you prevent damage while you are in hospital.

Self-assessment for skin damage

Look or feel for:

- Changes in skin colour (turning red or dark)
- Grazes
- Hot to touch areas
- Shiny patches
- Blisters
- Hard, swollen or sore areas

If you see any of these warning signs, talk to your midwife straight away.

Remember

- Changing position while you are in bed is really important to ease pressure and prevent damage to your skin
- Try to keep your skin dry
- If you have any questions or concerns please speak to your Midwife

Useful contact telephone numbers

Maternity Triage Unit (MTU) 01902 695037 (open 24 hours)

Fetal Assessment Unit 01902 695031
(Monday - Friday 09:00am – 17:00pm, from 20 weeks gestation)

Useful websites for more information

NICE Clinical guideline CG179: Pressure ulcers: prevention and management:
Published: 23 April 2014 Overview | Pressure ulcers: prevention and management https://www.nice.org.uk/Guidance/CG179

Society of Tissue Viability:
https://societyoftissueviability.org

Wounds UK website:
https://wounds-uk.com

Surgical Wounds / National wound care strategy:
https://nationalwoundcarestrategy.net

English

If you need information in another way like easy read or a different language please let us know.

If you need an interpreter or assistance please let us know.

Lithuanian

Jeigu norėtumėte, kad informacija jums būtų pateikta kitu būdu, pavyzdžiui, supaprastinta forma ar kita kalba, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Jeigu jums reikia vertėjo ar kitos pagalbos, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Polish

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać te informacje w innej postaci, na przykład w wersji łatwej do czytania lub w innym języku, prosimy powiedzieć nam o tym.

Prosimy poinformować nas również, jeżeli potrzebowaliby Państwo usługi tłumaczenia ustnego lub innej pomocy.

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਵਿਚ ਆਸਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੂਜੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ, ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

Romanian

Dacă aveți nevoie de informații în alt format, ca de exemplu caractere ușor de citit sau altă limbă, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Dacă aveți nevoie de un interpret sau de asistență, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Traditional Chinese

如果您需要以其他方式了解信息，如易读或其他语种，请告诉我们。

如果您需要口译人员或帮助，请告诉我们。

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