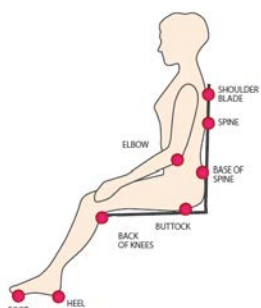


TWICE DAILY SKIN CHECKS – AN IMPORTANT SKIN MONITORING ROUTINE

After spinal cord injury (SCI), your skin is at risk of damage in areas where your sensation is reduced. Certain areas of your body are more at risk, such as over very bony parts like elbows and ankles, or areas that are under load such as your sitting bones. It is very important to develop a good daily skin care routine to monitor your skin for any red marks or signs of damage – a bruise, graze or small skin tear can develop into a much bigger wound or pressure injury if not found early. **Check your skin twice daily for any signs of redness or discolouration, warmth, change in texture or skin breakdown, and if you do notice changes, begin by removing pressure from the area and contact your health professional for advice as soon as possible.**

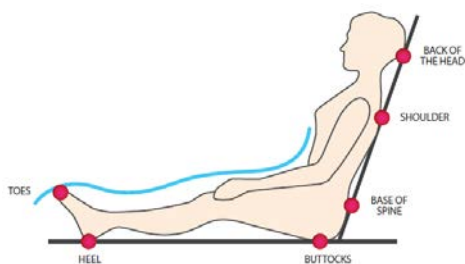
Body Position and Areas of Risk

Staying in one position for too long can reduce blood flow to the skin and cause compression and damage to the underlying tissue resulting in a pressure injury. Trauma such as a skin-graze during a transfer or even an ingrown hair can also cause a pressure injury if pressure is maintained over the wound. The images below show areas of increased risk of developing a pressure injury.

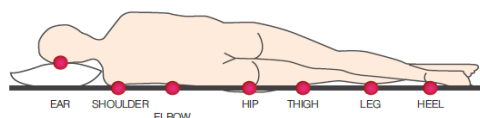
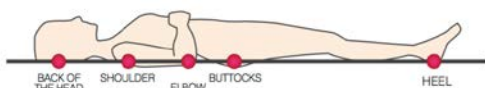


Your sitting bones, also known as the ischial tuberosity or "IT"s are at risk of high pressure loads in sitting. Your sacrum or tailbone may also be at risk if your posture is not well supported.

Sitting reclined in bed > 30 degrees backrest elevation puts strain on your sacrum or tailbone - causing shear.



Avoid sitting in bed with the backrest elevated, as this position puts both your sacrum and your heels at risk.



Protect bony areas in bed by using a high quality pressure-relieving mattress and changing position regularly.

Image credit: CEC Pressure Injury Project

<http://www.cec.health.nsw.gov.au/programs/pressure-injury-prevention-project>

Visit this website for important tips and information on skin care.

How to Check your Skin



Check your sitting bones, also known as the ischial tuberosity or "IT"s every day.



→ Check your skin twice daily in the morning and the evening – make this a habit that you do each and every day.

→ Look for redness, change of colour, bruising, dryness, rash, blisters or skin tears.

→ **TIP!** Use a wall mirror or a long handled mirror, or perhaps use your phone to take a photo or ask an assistant to help.

→ Check if your skin **feels** different either hot or cold or hard or soft.

→ Try to keep the skin clean and dry.



Other bony areas at risk of skin breakdown include the elbows, heels, and underneath your foot – particularly just below your little toe. If you are very thin, areas such as the upper spine or shoulder blades may also be at risk; if you are overweight, check the skin under skin folds; always ensure clothing and footwear aren't too tight, and avoid rigid materials, raised seams and back pockets on trousers or shorts.



Image credit: Skin Chapter, Spinal Cord Injury – University for Healthy Living

<http://www.sci-u.ca/>

Visit this website for important tips and information on skin care.