

HOW TO: Engage with staff and patients



Any pressure prevention strategy needs to involve the patient, family and carers for better outcomes. This how to guide looks at ways in which staff can be encouraged to drive sustainable pressure ulcer prevention campaigns and how to engage patients in their care to ensure a good patient experience and a reduction in the number of pressure ulcers.

WHY IS IMPORTANT TO ENGAGE WITH OTHERS?

We know from research and from talking with patients, that people want to be involved in deciding what treatment they should have, and when and where to have it. For this to happen it is necessary for healthcare professionals to discuss care and treatment options with patients in a way that allows them to make informed choices.

As well as ensuring involvement of the patient, the key to any successful pressure ulcer prevention strategy is staff engagement and excellent documentation and communication amongst the team managing the individual. One way of achieving this is through encouraging members of staff to become pressure ulcer prevention or skin care champions in their care setting.

INVOLVING PATIENTS IN PRESSURE ULCER PREVENTION

Shared decision-making requires care providers to engage with patients as partners, taking into account their cultural beliefs and concerns. It is not about simply providing information about why pressure ulcer prevention is important, but involving individuals in the decisions about the strategies and care bundles used in order to involve them in their treatment and to get their agreement on outcomes and goals. This means actively engaging patients in any repositioning programme, encouraging them to drink regularly and eat well, and teaching them to use any equipment provided correctly.

Listening to patients makes them feel that those caring from them have the time and gives them an opportunity to ask questions about their needs and feelings. It also allows any barriers to communication to be identified and all discussions should be

open and non-judgemental. This will allow you to find common ground and to build a level of trust.

To help establish a rapport with the patient it is important to ask questions and respond to them in a positive manner. This will help to motivate the patient and promote a level of self-care.

INVOLVING STAFF IN PRESSURE ULCER PREVENTION

It is possible to influence levels of staff engagement in any organisation. This can be achieved through supporting them in their development and training, involving them in decisions that affect them and the services they provide and ensuring a positive work environment with good levels of leadership. In addition, nurses or carers can be encouraged to become skin care or pressure ulcer champions to help raise the profile and priority of pressure ulcer prevention to reduce the number of pressure ulcers within the organisation.

Championing pressure ulcer prevention

A variety of initiatives can be introduced to sustain a pressure ulcer prevention programme. These include:

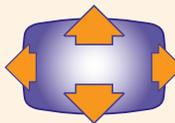
- Increasing awareness among staff of the importance of reducing pressure ulcer incidence
- Reviewing equipment ordering processes to identify where delays may occur
- Improving reporting systems
- Ensuring all documentation and information relevant to pressure ulcer prevention includes the SSKIN acronym
- Reviewing staff education to ensure the prevention message is consistent and providing training where gaps are identified
- Assessing staff's understanding of the key elements of pressure ulcer prevention.

Engage patients and staff by raising awareness

Did you know that pressure ulcers affect around 20% of people in nursing and residential homes?



Who is at risk?

RISK	 GREEN	 AMBER	 RED
SKIN	 INTACT/PINK	 SWOLLEN	 REDDENED/ BROKEN
MOISTURE	 CLEAN DRY SKIN/WELL- HYDRATED	 MOIST/ SWEATY SKIN	 WET/ INCONTINENT
WEIGHT	 NORMAL	 OBESE	 UNDERWEIGHT
SENSATION	 NO IMPAIRMENT	 LIMITED	 UNRESPONSIVE
MOBILITY	 ACTIVE	 NEEDS ASSISTANCE	 BED- RIDDEN
CO-MORBIDITIES	 LOW	 MEDIUM	 HIGH
NUTRITION	 HEALTHY	 COMPROMISED	 POOR



Benefits of engaging patients and staff

Patients

When patients talk about good care, they are referring to interactions that:

- ✓ Connect them emotionally with staff
- ✓ Foster a sense of control
- ✓ Build trust/confidence
- ✓ Help people to make informed decisions
- ✓ Engage them in conversation

Staff:

In delivering good care, those attending to patients need to:

- ✓ Listen to patients and act on what they say
- ✓ Offer information and give patients reasons for what they are doing
- ✓ Talk to patients about their level of risk of pressure damage
- ✓ Help patients to take ownership of their risk of pressure damage
- ✓ Maximise patients' independence
- ✓ Use appropriate equipment for concordance with prevention plans
- ✓ Be given appropriate education and training (including manual handling sessions for increased awareness)

Organisations:

Making pressure ulcer prevention a priority for patients and staff, should lead to:

- ✓ Improvement in staff education, skills, competencies
- ✓ Engagement/ownership
- ✓ Reduction in pressure ulcers
- ✓ Improvement in quality of patient care/experience



GREEN

Good uptake of pressure ulcer prevention strategies:

Continue to support staff and engage with patients on how to reduce number of pressure ulcers.



AMBER

Poor uptake of pressure ulcer prevention strategies:

Look at current provision of staff education/training and improve patient engagement.



RED

No pressure ulcer prevention strategies in place:

Appoint pressure ulcer/skin care champion to implement appropriate care bundles and raise awareness among staff and patients to help reduce numbers of pressure ulcers.

WHEN IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO COMMUNICATE EASILY

Communicating with patients can provide important clues about whether they understand what is happening to them. When patients are not able to speak for themselves it is important to involve family and carers in decisions about care plans. Others who find communicating difficult, such as those with dementia, will need to be reminded about the need to move regularly and the importance of eating and drinking.

Communication tips

- Keep it simple — one question at a time
- Do not interrupt or rush responses
- Maintain eye contact
- Encourage hand gestures and avoid crossing your arms or hiding your hands
- Use a positive tone
- Use touch to reassure and watch body language/ eye movement to check whether they are comfortable with what you are telling them
- Involve friends and family.

IMPROVING PATIENT CONCORDANCE

Any healthcare intervention has an element of uncertainty as to whether it will improve the health of the patient or prevent harm. Non-concordance is regularly cited as a reason for patients acquiring a pressure ulcer. By encouraging patients to ask questions about why certain interventions are needed and how to reduce their level of risk will help to empower them and foster greater patient satisfaction. This is important when a particular intervention conflicts with a patient's concerns and allows time to discuss different options in order to get their agreement.

HOW THIS GUIDE CAN BE USED TO PREVENT PRESSURE ULCERS

Patients who play active roles in the management of chronic health conditions seem to enjoy better outcomes over patients who play a more passive role in care. Patients and their families can be made aware of opportunities to engage in prevention strategies through education about the risks and encouraging patients to share information. Staff need to communicate effectively with patients and be supported in delivering quality care. For some, this will mean raising awareness about prevention and helping other members of staff to engage in strategies that help to reduce the number of pressure ulcers.

SSKIN Bundles

Keeping patients moving is just one step of a simple five-step care plan (called a SSKIN bundle) to ensure all patients receive the appropriate care to prevent pressure damage. This includes:



Using the Safety Cross

Using the pressure ulcer safety cross to measure incidents of pressure damage can help to raise awareness and change attitudes to pressure damage. Keep the safety cross in a public area so that everyone can see it on a regular basis. This will show how many patients have developed a pressure ulcer in the care home. It should be used to record all pressure ulcers, regardless of grade and should help to identify improvements in care and reduce the number of pressure ulcers occurring.

KEY POINTS

1. Staff need to discuss care and treatment options with patients in a way that allows them to make informed choices.
2. When patients have the knowledge and confidence to help manage their own health, they do better.
3. Assessing staff's understanding of pressure ulcer prevention can help to identify education and training needs to support the implement of strategies to reduce pressure ulcers.

KEY RESOURCES

- Best Practice Statement (2012) Caring for the Older Person's Skin 2012. <http://www.wounds-uk.com>
- NICE guidelines (2005) Pressure ulcer management. <http://www.nice.org.uk/CG029>
- SSKIN bundle. <http://www.stopthepressure.com/sskin>
- Safety cross (<http://www.patientsafetyfirst.nhs.uk/ashx/Asset.ashx?path=/PressureUlcers>)