

# AAWC Pressure Ulcer Guideline

A QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE FOR  
PRESSURE ULCER PREVENTION AND  
TREATMENT

A Synthesis of  
Pressure Ulcer Guidelines

Content Validated Standards  
Evidence-based References

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## Preventive Interventions

Determine PU risk	Validated risk tool; setting & population specific Targeted history & physical Psychosocial assessment Environmental assessment
Maintain & inspect skin	Skin hygiene & moisturizers Manage wetness & incontinence Inspect all skin & contact devices regularly
Optimize Nutrition & hydration	Assess nutritional status Ensure nutrient & fluid intake consistent with medical condition & patient wishes
Optimize activity & mobility	Range of motion Rehabilitation program Early ambulation
Manage shear, friction	Limit HOB elevation as medically feasible Transfer devices & techniques Posturing devices & techniques Skin barriers
Off-load pressure points	Individualized positioning for comfort, alignment & support Individualized repositioning schedule Pressure redistribution devices bed, chair, transport & procedural surfaces consistent with risk Individualized ergonomic seating for chair-bound
Manage comorbidities & individual needs	Interdisciplinary collaboration Off-loading equipment specialist OT/PT referral RD referral Incontinence specialist
Educate patient, caregiver, healthcare providers	PU etiology & risk factors Pressure related skin changes Individualized interventions Device use & maintenance Reporting & documentation

## Treatment Interventions

Maintain Preventive program	Review past interventions Revise interventions to optimize current treatment & healing goals Establish patient centered goals
Remove PU etiology	Identify & address causative factors Upgrade pressure redistribution products on bed/chair/limb consistent with wound status, individual goals & setting Reduce contact on ulcer site as able
Manage local & systemic factors	Debride devitalized tissue as indicated Cleanse ulcer with biocompatible solution Manage infection & contaminants Select ulcer dressing consistent with wound status, drainage & treatment goal Manage ulcer-related pain Oral, enteral or parenteral protein, vitamin, mineral, calorie supplement as indicated per individual goal Stabilize metabolic & vascular factors Differential diagnostics if indicated
Other treatment considerations	Adjunctive/advanced treatment modalities Surgical interventions Palliative care program
Evaluate response to treatment	Measure ulcer & document overall progress weekly & PRN Revise care, diagnosis or treatment goal if negative or delayed outcome
Detailed ulcer assessment for consistency & reliability	Validated ulcer documentation tool Document ulcer location, ulcer stage, size, exudate type & amount, odor, appearance of tissue, presence undermining or tunneling, ulcer margins & periwound skin Evaluate for complications in chronic or severe ulcers

Please refer to AAWC Pressure Ulcer  
Guideline or Evidence Table for more detail at:  
[aawconline.org/professional-resources/resources](http://aawconline.org/professional-resources/resources)