

These are reddened painful skin caused by the loss of blood supply to the skin due to continuous pressure on the affected parts.

What to look for

- a painful and swollen red patch of skin, on any part of the skin which is pressed against something with pressure for a period of time.
- a raw, open sore.

Bedsore are common among those people who are bedridden.

Causes

Bedsore are caused by the loss of blood supply to the skin due to continuous pressure on the affected parts. The areas usually affected are the heels, ankles, knees, base of the spine, buttocks, hips, elbows and shoulders. They begin being red and sore and can quickly turn into a slow healing, painful open sore. Care must be taken to keep the patient with bedsore dry at all times as the bedsore can easily become infected if the skin is left damp. The people most prone to bedsore are those with diabetes, who are underweight, overweight, paralysed, people with poor circulation or heart problems.

Traditional Treatment

The normal treatment for bedsore is to clean the wound, remove any dead skin, and cover the area with a dressing that does not stick to the damaged skin.

To prevent bedsore from occurring try at all costs to avoid putting excess pressure on any one area of the skin for too long. Anyone who is bedridden must be turned regularly by a nurse. A soft material such as sheepskin can be placed under pressure points to help lessen the likelihood of bedsore developing.

Alternative/Natural Treatments

Alternative treatments can relieve pain. The patient must also be moved often.

Herbal Therapies -

Comfrey ointment promotes healing. To ease minor inflammation, apply a marsh mallow (*Althaea officinalis*) root ointment; or try a poultice made from slippery elm (*Ulmus fulva*) bark, marsh mallow root, and echinacea (*Echinacea* spp.) blended with a small amount of hot water. Two drops of essential tea tree oil (*Melaleuca* spp.) in a cup of water makes an infection-fighting rinse.

Dietary Considerations

People with bedsore need to drink plenty of water. Certain vitamins and minerals, especially vitamins A, C, E, and B complex, and zinc, will benefit their skin. Vitamin C in particular has been shown to be effective in healing bedsore.

Personal Care at Home

Care always needs to be taken when caring for the elderly or invalids at home.

- Make sure the person confined to bed or a wheelchair moves his body as often as possible when awake.
- Proper cushioning is vital to prevent bedsore.

Prevention

As mentioned previously, people confined to wheelchairs or beds should move frequently as well as be completely dry to avoid bedsore. Moisturiser should be used to keep the skin supple and their sheets should be clean and dry. Also a healthy diet will help their skin stay in good condition.

When to seek further professional advice

- the sore produces a discharge or pus.