

Preventing Pressure Injuries in Home Healthcare

Nearly 2.5 million people develop a pressure injury every year, and 60,000 people die every year as a direct result of pressure injuries, according to the National Pressure Injury Advisory Panel (NPIAP).¹ Pressure injuries can be painful and expensive to treat; they also increase the risk of infection and hospitalization, and sometimes lead to death.² Elderly people and people who are immobile or have limited mobility are at increased risk for pressure injuries, which makes these wounds a top concern in various healthcare settings, including home healthcare.

Preventing pressure injuries requires an interdisciplinary approach to care and coordination among all home care providers who are involved in developing and implementing patients' care plans. Additionally, an agency/organizational culture and operational practices that promote teamwork and communication will facilitate an increased focus on pressure injury prevention and optimize patients' care and safety.

Home healthcare agencies (and other organizations that offer home care services) and home care providers can use this checklist to evaluate processes and pinpoint areas for improving pressure injury prevention and treatment strategies.³

	Yes	No
<i>Risk Assessment/Skin Evaluation</i>		
Does your agency have policies and procedures related to pressure injury prevention and treatment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does agency policy require that each new patient receive a skin evaluation to assess for pressure injuries?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are home care providers required to use a structured pressure injury assessment tool to identify patients at risk for pressure injuries?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Yes	No
<i>Risk Assessment/Skin Evaluation (continued)</i>		
Does agency policy require further assessment of patients with existing pressure injuries, those with fragile skin, those with impairments in blood flow to the extremities, as well as those with pain in areas of the body exposed to pressure?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are patients routinely reevaluated for pressure injuries (e.g., minimally weekly or when a change occurs in a patient’s condition)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does your agency require that home care providers use a valid and reliable screening tool to determine which patients are at risk for undernutrition or malnutrition?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does your agency have protocols for protecting patients’ tissue and minimizing friction, shear, and moisture from fixed medical devices?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do home care providers assess pressure points, such as the sacrum, coccyx, buttocks, heels, ischium, trochanters, and elbows?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do home care providers evaluate the skin underneath medical devices on patients each time care is provided?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do home care providers note and report any redness on a patient’s skin when it does not disappear or when it’s on a new open skin area, especially over a bony area or in relation to a medical device?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do home care providers inspect darkly pigmented skin by looking for changes in skin tone, skin temperature, and tissue consistency compared to adjacent skin?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does your agency have designated wound care nurses to evaluate reddened areas of concern along with current wounds?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has your agency considered having providers perform periodic physical, psychological, and psychosocial reassessments of patients with pressure injuries?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Pressure Injury Prevention Strategies</i>		
Does your agency provide a protocol for pressure injury prevention, such as the Standardized Pressure Injury Prevention Protocol (S-PIPP) ?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Yes	No
<i>Pressure Injury Prevention Strategies (continued)</i>		
Do home care providers monitor the eating habits of patients with pressure injuries?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do home care providers assess patients' oral, enteral, and parenteral intake to ensure it is sufficient?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do undernourished or malnourished patients receive nutrition support?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do home care providers encourage patients to consume adequate fluids to stay hydrated and to eat a balanced diet?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are effective toileting schedules used since incontinence is a major contributing factor to skin breakdown?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do home care providers ensure that patients' skin is cleansed promptly after episodes of incontinence?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do home care providers use pH-balanced skin cleansers on patients and apply skin moisturizers on patients' dry skin daily?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are special care plans used for patients who develop pressure injuries as a result of immobility?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do home care providers avoid positioning patients on existing pressure injuries or reddened areas?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are at-risk patients turned or repositioned at appropriate intervals?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is a turn/reposition schedule in place that optimizes independent movement and reduces friction/shear?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do home care providers ensure that patients' heels are free from their beds?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are heel offloading techniques/devices used on patients at a high risk for heel ulcers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are regular pressure reliefs (i.e., weight shifting, pressure redistribution, and pressure reduction) used as part of care plans?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Yes	No
Pressure Injury Prevention Strategies (continued)		
For patients who have medical devices, have home care providers determined that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each patient has the proper size and type of device? • Devices are secure to decrease movement or slippage? • Skin is padded to reduce friction? • Manufacturers' recommendations for use and care of devices are followed? 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do home care providers place thin foam or breathable dressings under medical devices that patients are wearing?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do home care providers look for signs of pain in noncommunicative patients as well as nonverbal cues of pain and discomfort?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Awareness/Education		
Are home care providers knowledgeable about medical device-related pressure injuries as well as mucosal membrane pressure injuries?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are home care providers aware of the pressure injury staging system, including the staging illustrations from NPIAP?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can home care providers effectively identify the stages/categories of pressure injuries?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are home care providers familiar with unstageable pressure injuries and deep tissue pressure injuries?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are home care providers aware of the role that microclimate, pressure, and shear force play in pressure injuries?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does your agency have an educational plan to enhance home care providers' knowledge of pressure injury prevention and treatment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are all members of the interdisciplinary team educated and trained on the agency's pressure injury plan of care?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Yes	No
<i>Awareness/Education (continued)</i>		
Does the agency provide routine evidence-based pressure injury prevention and treatment education?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are patients, families, and caregivers educated about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What pressure injuries are? • What causes pressure injuries? • Risk factors for pressure injuries? • Signs of pressure injuries? • Strategies for preventing pressure injuries (e.g., proper nutrition, positioning, hygiene, etc.)? • Treatment for pressure injuries? 	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Are home care providers trained to assess bariatric patients (and other at-risk patients) for pressure injuries?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are home care providers educated about the correct use of medical devices and prevention of skin breakdown?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are families/caregivers of patients who have medical devices educated about the device, what it is, where it is located, why it is there, how it functions, and how long it will stay in place?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does your agency monitor the incidence and prevalence of medical device-related pressure injuries?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If yes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the resulting data used to benchmark with other agencies? • Are the results shared with the agency's employees? 	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Does your agency provide training to improve communication among all members of the care team?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does your agency use reliable and valid assessment tools to routinely assess the knowledge and attitudes of its staff members?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Yes	No
Communication/Documentation		
Does your agency have communication and documentation policies (e.g., expectations for respectful and courteous communication between all members of the care team, standards for documenting care, and procedures for care handoffs)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are different types of home care providers aware of their communication and documentation accountabilities (e.g., physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, nurses, certified nursing assistants, etc.)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are the patients' assessments, interventions, and continuing care needs communicated from one caregiver to another to ensure successful handoffs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do home care providers promptly communicate and address changes identified during routine risk assessments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do home care providers document all care for pressure injuries in patients' health records?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do home care providers document all education provided to patients, families, and caregivers about pressure injuries and prevention methods?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Resources

For more information, see MedPro's [Risk Resources: Pressure Injuries in Older Adults](#).

Endnotes

¹ National Pressure Injury Advisory Panel. (n.d.). *NPIAP fact sheet*. Retrieved from https://cdn.ymaws.com/npiap.com/resource/resmgr/npiap_pru_awareness_fact_she.pdf

² Al Aboud, A. M., & Manna, B. (2023, April 19 [Last Updated]). Wound pressure injury management. *StatPearls*. Retrieved from www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK532897/

³ This checklist is based on information from the following sources: National Pressure Injury Advisory Panel. (2016 [Last Updated]). *Pressure injury prevention points*. Retrieved from <https://npiap.com/page/PreventionPoints>; Institute for Healthcare Improvement. (2011). *How-to guide: Prevent pressure ulcers*. Retrieved from <https://sageproducts.com/wp-content/uploads/HowtoGuidePreventPressureUlcers.pdf>

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