

A Guide To Off-Loading



Off-Loading – What Is It?

Off-loading is positioning the body so that pressure does not rest on top of the wounded area. This can be achieved by simply not resting directly on the wound and using a special type of bed, chair pad, shoe, or cast.



Different Types Of Off-Loading

While in bed, attempt to change positions frequently, or at least every two hours. Lift your body, rather than scooting, when changing positions. Avoid sitting in bed with your head in an elevated position for prolonged periods of time. When positioned on your side, place a pillow between the knees to reduce pressure of one knee on the other.



Special pads or cushions will reduce the pressure caused by the weight of the body during sitting. You should not sit in the same position for more than one hour at a time. Attempt to shift or reposition your weight every 15 minutes when up. If you are unable to move yourself, have your caregiver change your position every hour. Do not sit on donut shaped cushions or pillows.



Pressure wounds to the legs or feet require a special shoe, boot or cast that prevents the area of injury from resting directly on or rubbing against the bed or other furniture. If the wound is on the foot, do not walk or put pressure on the area of injury. The weight of the body will cause more harm to the wound. Insure that you wear the specialty shoe or boot any time you are on your feet, not just when you go outside. In some severe cases your doctor may direct you to totally be off your leg by using a wheelchair or by staying in bed.

If you find a new area of breakdown with increased redness, swelling or warmth, call the Wound Center.

Areas of the body should be looked at daily with special attention paid to areas of redness or broken skin, especially in bony areas. A moisturizer can be used on dry areas. Avoid using moisturizer between the toes. Avoid rubbing or heavy massage in areas of redness when applying moisturizer.



Any wound that has not started to heal in two weeks or completely healed in six weeks may benefit from a specialized wound care center. Ask your regular physician if a referral to a center for wound care might be the right option for you.