

How Slide Sheets Prevent Pressure Ulcers to the Heels

The risk of a pressure ulcer developing on a heel is higher than other bony prominences due to the anatomical location (no muscle or fascia and little subcutaneous tissue). The risk increases further if the patient is immobile, has the presence of previous pressure ulcers and/or scar tissue, there is suboptimal tissue perfusion, the patient has diabetes mellitus or has a raised BMI due to the weight of the foot and lower leg when lying down.



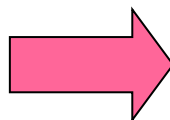
When slide sheets are used underneath the heels when undertaking repositioning and movement techniques in bed the shear force to the heels are reduced by approximately 66% (Kohta et al 2021) when compared to no slide sheets being used. Therefore using 2 slide sheets as a minimum, to cover the whole mattress surface can significantly reduce the interface friction and internal shear forces in the whole skin surface that is in contact with the mattress.

Please ensure a minimum of 2 slide sheets per patient are used to cover the whole bed surface when a patient is assessed as requiring assistance or is unable to achieve a position change, to cover the whole body surface.

Consider using at least 4 when assisting with patients using bariatric equipment.

Please view this video showcasing the importance of slide sheets: <https://youtu.be/1cTRpauNsXQ>

Example of the focus on the heels when slide sheets are not used



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