

This leaflet is written for patients by patients and is based on experience and medical information.

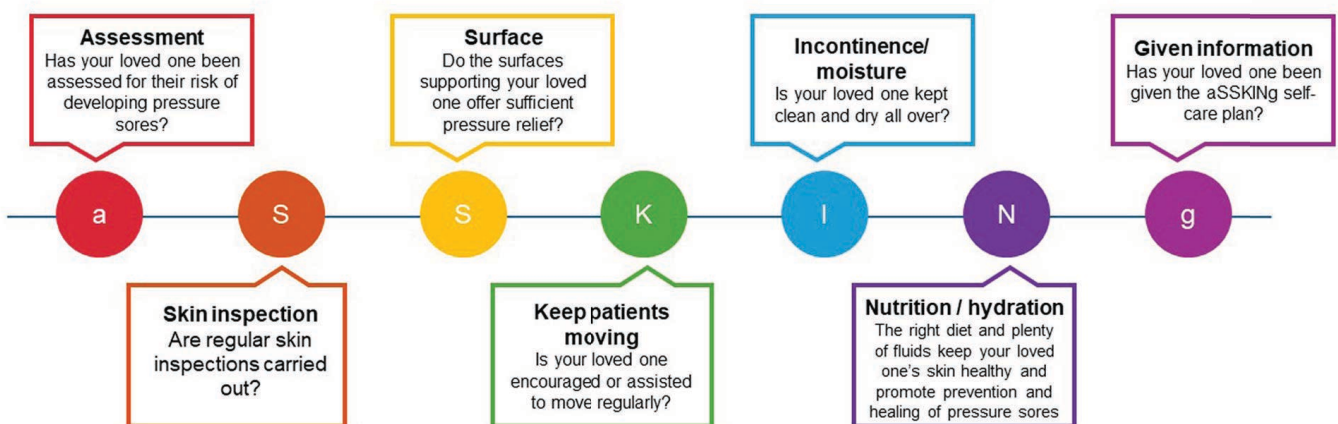
Loved One in Care (hospital, nursing/care home, or at home) Pressure Sores: What to look out for

Despite improvements in pressure sore (also known as pressure ulcers) prevention across many UK care facilities, pressure sores continue to affect up to 20% of all patients in hospitals, nursing homes and residential homes.

It has been widely reported that the vast majority of all pressure sores can be avoided with effective patient care. Prevention is important because pressure sores can be very hard to treat once acquired and can be fatal.

This leaflet aims to give you tips for what good care looks like, and how to help prevent your loved one developing a pressure sore.

aSSKINg: 7 simple steps The aSSKINg acronym is part of new clinical guidance to prevent pressure sores. We have adapted it to show the seven steps that greatly assist in the prevention of pressure sores from a patient/ carer perspective.



aSSKINg: 7 simple steps

The seven letters stand for:

Assessment	Has your loved one been assessed for their risk of developing pressure sores? Identifying and actioning risk early is key to preventing pressure sores developing in the first place.
Surface	Do the surfaces supporting your loved one offer sufficient pressure relief? It is vital to ensure that supporting surfaces offer sufficient relief from pressure to avoid further damage and encourage healing.
Skin inspection	Are regular skin inspections carried out? Early inspection enables early detection which is when sores are the easiest to treat. It may be more difficult to see colour changes on darker skin tones.
Keep patients moving	Is your loved one encouraged or assisted to move regularly? Regular body movement assists blood flow and redistributes pressure. If your loved one is unable to move by themselves is there a plan in place to ensure movement?
Incontinence / moisture	Is your loved one kept clean and dry all over? A clean and dry patient is better protected from developing pressure sores
Nutrition / hydration	Is your loved one getting the right diet and plenty of fluids? The right diet and plenty of fluids keep the patient's skin healthy and promote prevention and healing of pressure sores
Given Information	Has your loved one been given the aSSKINg information in a simple self-care plan? Prevention is much better than treatment!

The aSSKINg acronym refers specifically to pressure sore prevention. In general, you should look out for the following:

Changes in Appearance	Look for any marks or discolouration of the skin which could indicate areas of pressure or skin deterioration. It may also feel warm to touch, be painful, hard or numb.
Changes in Demeanour	These could indicate that something has changed, maybe in discomfort, or that your loved one does not feel safe or supported in their care or environment.
Care Plans	Does your loved one have one? These should be thorough and meet your loved one's needs. It would be helpful to have an emergency care plan in advance.
Turning and Repositioning Schedules	Are they being repositioned (or turned) as per their recommended schedule? This is essential to avoid pressure sore deterioration. Are the heels and legs raised, to avoid a heel pressure sore?
Staffing Levels	Have you seen enough staff around to support your relative? Are they responsive when something is needed?

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Communication and Independence	Check your loved one is involved in their care plans (where there is capacity) and can access assistance and support. Wellbeing and feeling involved is important to health and recovery.
Nutrition and Hydration	Check that this is adequate to meet additional needs, such as increased protein for wound healing, enough drinks to keep them properly hydrated. See link to NHS Eat Well guides below.
Equipment and Medicines	Are these available when required? A shortage could affect wound healing, for example, not having the right type of dressing.
Cleanliness	Are there good cleanliness levels and practice, to avoid infection and wounds developing? Are staff washing their hands before touching your loved one?
Safety	Does the environment appear safe on a physical level? Does your loved one feel safe when their care is being given?
Respect	That treatment is given with dignity, respect and privacy in mind.

Resources / Checklists

- Age UK: <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/care/arranging-care/care-homes/choosing-care-home/>
- Care UK: <https://www.careuk.com/help-advice/your-checklist-for-moving-into-a-care-home>
- Care Choices: <https://www.carechoices.co.uk/checklists/>
- CQC good care: <https://www.cqc.org.uk/care-services/what-expect-good-care-service>
- Independent Age: <https://www.independentage.org/care-home-checklist>
- NHS personalised care: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/personalisedcare/what-is-personalised-care/>
- NICE improving care experience: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg138/chapter/1-guidance>
- NHS Eat Well Guides: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/food-guidelines-and-food-labels/the-eatwell-guide/>



Citylabs 1.0, Nelson Street, Manchester M13 9NQ
nationalwoundcarestrategy.net

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