

# Nutrition for Preventing and Treating Pressure Ulcers

---

## What are pressure ulcers?

Pressure ulcers happen when something is always pressing or rubbing against an area of skin. This pressure can cause less blood going to the area. This can cause your skin to develop sores and pressure ulcers.

## What are the risk factors?

You may develop a pressure ulcer if you have diabetes or blood flow problems, or if you are:

- Over 65 years of age
- using a wheelchair or staying in bed for long periods of time
- not able to move some parts of your body without help
- not able to control when you urinate or have a bowel movement
- not eating a healthy diet
- have recently lost weight
- not drinking enough water

## What are the most common places to develop a pressure ulcer?

- Buttocks or bottom
- Elbow
- Hips
- Heels
- Ankles
- Shoulders
- Back
- Back of the head

## Can diet and nutrition help to prevent pressure ulcers?

Eating enough food and choosing a variety of foods from each food group at meal times will help stop pressure ulcers from happening. Follow these guidelines to reduce your risk:

- Eat a healthy diet
- Eat enough calories to maintain your weight

Patient Food and Nutrition Services

- Make sure you are eating enough protein
- Drink enough water, 6-8 cups a day

**Eat a Well-Balanced Diet:**

- Make sure to eat foods that are high in protein at every meal and snack (such as milk, yogurt, beans, eggs, meat, fish)
- Drink plenty of fluids like water, unless you have been told by your doctor or dietitian to limit how much you drink.

<b>Food Group</b>	<b>Recommended Foods</b>
<b>Meat and Other Protein Foods</b> (2-3 servings a day)  A serving size for meat is about the size of a deck of cards and a 3 oz serving of fish is about the size of a checkbook	3 oz. beef, veal, pork, lamb, poultry 3 oz. fish or seafood 1 egg and ¼ cup egg product ½ cup tofu ½ cup beans like kidney, black, or pinto beans 2 Tbsp peanut butter
<b>Milk and Milk Products</b> (2-3 servings a day)	1 cup whole, 2%, 1%, or skim milk Cheese (1 oz looks like 6 stacked dice) 1 cup yogurt
<b>Grains</b> (6-11 servings a day)	1 slice bread (whole grain, whole wheat) ½ cup pasta (whole grain, whole wheat) Cereal (½ cup hot or 1 cup cold) 4 Crackers or pretzels ½ cup rice
<b>Fruit and Vegetables</b> (5-6 servings a day)	1 small fresh fruit, ½ cup canned fruit, 1 cup raw leafy vegetables, or ½ cup cooked vegetables
<b>Fats and Oils</b> (2 servings a day)	1 tsp oil (Canola, vegetable, olive) 1 tsp soft margarine 1 Tbsp Mayonnaise
<b>Beverages</b> (6-8 servings a day)	1 cup water ½ cup 100% fruit juice 1 cup decaffeinated coffee/tea

**Drink Nutritional Drinks:**

Your dietitian may ask you to drink a nutritional supplement such as Carnation Instant Breakfast Essentials<sup>®</sup>, Ensure Plus<sup>®</sup>, Boost Breeze<sup>®</sup>, or Glucerna<sup>®</sup>. These will help to make sure your body is getting enough energy and protein to help heal pressure sores.

**Take a Daily Multivitamin:**

Taking a daily multivitamin will make sure that your body is getting all the vitamins and minerals that may be missing in your meals.

Disclaimer: This document contains information and/or instructional materials developed by the University of Michigan Health System (UMHS) for the typical patient with your condition. It may include links to online content that was not created by UMHS and for which UMHS does not assume responsibility. It does not replace medical advice from your health care provider because your experience may differ from that of the typical patient. Talk to your health care provider if you have any questions about this document, your condition or your treatment plan.

Authors: Katrina Koller & Sarah Price, Dietetic Interns  
Terri Stommen, MPH, RD

Patient Education by [University of Michigan Health System](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License](#). Last Revised 02/2015

Write down what you eat so you can work with your doctor or dietitian about a plan to help heal your pressure ulcers.

Date:	Foods:
Day 1: __/__/__	
Day 2: __/__/__	
Day 3: __/__/__	
Day 4: __/__/__	
Day 5: __/__/__	
Day 6: __/__/__	
Day 7: __/__/__	