



## Skin Integrity



### THINGS THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE:

- Be an advocate for your loved one
- Be present on a regular basis if possible
- Communicate with caregivers regarding your loved ones needs and comfort
- Be a partner in your loved ones care

### NOTIFY CAREGIVERS – SIGNS OF THREAT TO SKIN INTEGRITY:

- Skin redness
- Warm areas
- Spongy or hard skin
- Breakdown of the top layers of skin or a sore

### RESOURCES

#### SARCOPENIA

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4066461/>

#### SKIN FAILURE

<https://www.managedhealthcareconnect.com/article/skin-failure-identifying-and-managing-underrecognized-condition>

#### SKIN AGING

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3583891/>

**HealthCap**  
RISK MANAGEMENT SERVICES

130 S. First Street | Suite 400 | Ann Arbor, MI 48104  
734.996.2700 ph | 734.996.1261 fax  
QARader.com | HealthCapUSA.com

**Skin integrity refers to skin health. A skin integrity issue might mean the skin is damaged, vulnerable to injury or unable to heal normally.**

### WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

One of the most basic needs of your loved one is to maintain intact, healthy, moisturized skin. Intact skin is the body's first line of defense against infection, provides a protective barrier from numerous environmental threats and assists the skin in retaining moisture.

## YOUR LOVED ONE

As we age we are at increased risk for skin integrity issues. It is important to talk to your caregivers about any changes in skin condition or changes in the overall health of your loved one.

## what causes poor skin integrity?

### HIGH RISK AREAS

- HEELS AND ANKLES
- KNEES
- HIPS
- SPINE
- TAILBONE AREA
- ELBOWS
- SHOULDERS & SHOULDER BLADES
- BACK OF THE HEAD
- EARS

### IMMOBILITY

Encourage your loved one to be out of bed and active; even slight adjustments in positioning are beneficial

### POSITIONING

Reposition every 2 hours; provide pillows, wedge cushions, etc. as needed; ask for assistance as needed

### POOR NUTRITION/WEIGHT LOSS

Encourage a well balanced diet; request a dietary consult; make likes and dislikes known to caregivers

### INCONTINENCE

Prompt attention to incontinence episodes; notify caregivers immediately for assistance

### HYDRATION

Offer fluids during each visit if permitted and check that fresh water is at the bedside

### IMPAIRED MENTAL STATUS

Be an advocate; speak for your loved one if they are unable

### LOSS OF SENSATION/DIABETES/ NEUROPATHY

Provide footwear that fit well; encourage compliance with diet

### FRACTURES

Increase immobility; often bed/wheelchair bound; encourage participation in PT/OT; assist with repositioning for comfort

### SKIN FAILURE

Skin is an organ and like any organ in the human body, it can fail resulting in increased fragility and risk of pressure injuries

### SARCOPENIA

An overall physical decline with loss of muscle tissue beneath the skin

