Queensland Spinal Cord Injuries Service

SPINAL INJURIES UNIT
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OUTPATIENT DEPARTMENT
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Postal and Location
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Fact Sheet

Pressure Area Management in the Spinal Injuries Unit

Pressure areas can happen to anyone. If yours has progressed beyond your control, or requires surgical management, you may need to be admitted to hospital for treatment.

What to expect on admission!

- On admission to the unit your wound and general medical condition will be assessed by both nursing and medical staff.
- Your wound will be swabbed (to show any infection that may be present) and nursing staff will commence appropriate dressings.
- You will be required to **stay off the affected area**, which will most likely mean being **confined to bed**. This is to promote good blood supply to the area and assist wound healing. THIS MAY MEAN TURNING SIDE TO SIDE ONLY, OR GOING PRONE (on your belly) if necessary.
- Your wound will be assessed by a plastic surgeon, looking for the best option for your wound treatment. NOT ALL WOUNDS ARE SUITABLE FOR SURGERY, which may mean a long period of time (often months) in bed with regular dressings being performed.

Dressing Options

- Your wound will be assessed to determine which dressing is suitable.
- How often your wound is dressed depends on a number of factors such as depth of the wound, amount of ooze and if an infection is present.
- **Alginate** (eg Kaltostat, Dermasorb) and **Foam** dressings (eg Allevyn, Lyofoam, Cutinova) are generally used on wounds with large amounts of ooze. They absorb the ooze, promoting moist wound healing and generally only need to be changed daily.
- **Hydrogels** (eg Intrasite and Duoderm gels) are water-based gels that rehydrate dead tissue, for cleaning and debriding sloughy and necrotic wounds. They can be left intact for up to 3 days, or changed as required.
- **Saline** dressings (packing with gauze) work by heating the wound and providing a moist healing environment. As the gauze is removed, it also acts to debride the wound.

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Surgical Management

- If surgical intervention is required your operating date will be dependent on a number of factors, including:
  - Available theatre times – due to limited operating dates you may be required to wait a number of weeks before your surgery.
  - Wound health - You may be required to wait until your wound is clean enough for surgery, decreasing the risk of post-operative breakdown or infection.
- The expected recovery period post surgery is 6 – 8 weeks.

- **For example:**

Day of Surgery
Post Operative Period
↓
Day 1 – IV Therapy out
↓
Day 8 – Drain/s out
↓
Day 15 – Sutures out
↓
Day 29 – Free Bed Mobility
↓
Day 43 – Start Sitting Regime
↓
Fully Mobile

- **This is a general guideline of recovery after surgery.** Please remember that not all wounds will heal as planned, and you may have some setbacks. **If the wound is infected, it may heal slowly.**

Sitting Regime

- Once your wound has healed you will be started on a sitting regime.
- This regime allows the fragile scar tissue to stretch and adjust to bearing pressure, decreasing the risk of the area breaking down.

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- **Guidelines to sitting regime:**
  - Back to bed between sits (not lying on wound site).
  - Skin inspections after each sit.
  - If area is broken – rest in bed until healed and restart the regime.
  - Hoist transfers only (unless cleared by a physiotherapist to transfer)
  - No shower/toilet chair until fully mobile.

Discharge Dates

It is important to realize you may require further time in the Unit after becoming fully mobile to rebuild strength and skills lost during long periods of bed rest. You may also need to trial or order new equipment.

DAY	SITTING TIME	SITTING TIME	DAY	SITTING TIME	SITTING TIME
Last 1	30 Minutes	30 Minutes	10	90 Minutes	90 Minutes
2	30 Minutes	30 Minutes	11	90 Minutes	90 Minutes
3	30 Minutes	30 Minutes	12	120 Minutes	120 Minutes
Review 4	45 Minutes	45 Minutes	13	150 Minutes	150 Minutes
5	45 Minutes	45 Minutes	14	180 Minutes	180 Minutes
6	45 Minutes	45 Minutes	15	**Progress as tolerated up to fully mobile eg increase by hourly increments daily.**	
7	60 Minutes	60 Minutes			
8	60 Minutes	60 Minutes			
9	60 Minutes	60 Minutes			

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Queensland Government

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