

# CHCA Project ECHO Personal Care Providers

## All Teach, All Learn

Building Skills, Knowledge, and Confidence



## Understanding Pressure Injuries and Skin Tears

Based on insights from Whitney Hendrick, Justine Lowry, and Danielle Heisler of Interior Health, BC  
Project ECHO PCP: Preventing Wounds, Promoting Comfort | June 17, 2025

### What This Session Focused On

This session helped personal care providers understand how pressure injuries and skin tears form, their causes, and ways to prevent them. It covered signs to watch for, safe techniques for offloading pressure, tools to support healing, gentle skin tear care, and when to involve others in the care team for support.

### Understanding Pressure Injuries

- Pressure injuries (also called bedsores or pressure ulcers) happen when the skin and tissue under it are damaged by staying in one position too long. This cuts off blood flow and can lead to red areas, open wounds, or deep sores.
- These injuries often form over bony spots like heels, tailbone, hips, elbows, and shoulders. People who can't move easily or sit/lie in the same position for hours are most at risk.
- If not treated early, they can become open, painful wounds that take a long time to heal.

### Offloading Pressure: Why It Matters

- Offloading reduces pressure by shifting weight from body parts, easing stress on tissues and blood vessels. After pressure is relieved, it may take over a minute for blood flow to return to the area.

### Prevention and Comfort Measures

Repositioning clients at least every 2 hours:

- Leaning forward while sitting can reduce pressure on the tailbone (sacrum) and lower back by shifting body weight to the thighs, offloading pressure from high-risk areas
- Use pillows or foam wedges to “float” heels off the mattress and support the arms and legs.
- Do not cover specially designed mattresses or chair pads because it can stop them from working properly.



### Skin Tears: What to Know

- Skin tears happen when fragile skin is pulled, bumped, or rubbed.

### Prevention and Comfort Measures

- Help to dress people gently, using loose or stretchy clothes, keep a person's fingernails short, consider bed rails and furniture that have may have edges or corners that could cause injury.
- If a skin tear happens notify the home care team right away. You may be instructed on how to gently stop the bleeding, keep the skin flap in place and cover it with a soft, non-stick dressing.



Personal care providers are essential healthcare team members who deliver personal care and support to individuals receiving home care. This Project ECHO stream reinforces national standards and best practices and offers opportunities to learn new skills, gain knowledge from experts, and connect with peers in home care. This stream is designed to make learning easy, practical, and effective.

The Canadian Home Care Association (CHCA) is a national non-profit association focused on strengthening integrated home-based care. Representing public and private organizations across the country the CHCA partners with members to address pan-Canadian priorities through advocacy, awareness, innovation, and knowledge exchange.  
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