

MDS Alert

RISK MANAGEMENT: 18 Risk Factors That Could Make or Break Your Pressure Ulcer Prevention Efforts

Do a careful assessment to see if a resident has any of the following risk factors for skin breakdown, advises **Jenny Hurlow, GNP, CWOCN**, a geriatric nurse practitioner and wound care specialist in Memphis, Tenn.

- Incontinence
- Weight loss
- Impaired ability to perform late-loss activities of daily living (ADLs), including ability to feed self
- ADL decline
- Impaired cognitive functioning, especially a decline
- Impaired ambulation
- Depression indicators
- Sedatives (anti-anxiety agents), hypnotics, antipsychotics • Fluid/hydration deficit
- Decrease in meal intake or poor intake
- Nutritional problems
- Oral health problems (could reduce intake)
- Physical restraints
- End-stage disease
- Unstable conditions
- Pain
- Previously healed pressure ulcer
- **Certain comorbid conditions.** Hurlow urges paying attention "to any comorbid condition that affects mobility, perfusion, and sensation."

Research: A recently published study found that elderly nursing home patients with non-blanchable erythema (stage 1 pressure ulcers) who have hypotension, contractures, or a history of stroke require more "intensive" efforts to prevent pressure ulcers (Vanderwee K et al. Journal of Clinical Nursing. Vol. 18, No. 21, November 2009 at www.ingentaconnect.com/content/bsc/jcn/2009/00000018/00000021/art00014).