

## The Silvercrest Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation

is a unique center of excellence, dedicated to Giving Quality to Life for all whom it serves, including:

- ◆ Older and younger adults who are chronically ill or traumatized and who make Silvercrest their home.
- ◆ People who need rehabilitation before returning to an independent life.
- ◆ Ventilator-dependent patients who require weaning from ventilation.
- ◆ People with Alzheimer's Disease and other dementias who need a nurturing and safe environment that promotes functioning.

144-45 87 Avenue  
Briarwood, NY 11435  
Tel: 718.480.4000  
Fax: 718.658.2367  
www.silvercrest.org  
Admissions: 718.480.4007  
admissions@silvercrest.org

The  
Silvercrest  
Center  
for nursing  
and rehabilitation

**Giving Quality to Life**

# About Pressure Ulcers

## Prevention & Treatment



Member

 **New York-Presbyterian Healthcare System**

 Affiliate: Weill Medical College of Cornell University

# About Pressure Ulcers

## What is a pressure ulcer?

Pressure ulcers (also known as bedsores) occur when the skin's underlying tissue dies and breaks down due to decreased blood flow, for instance, from lying in a prone position for some time. A pressure ulcer starts as reddened skin, then becomes a blister, then an open sore, and, unchecked, a crater. Vulnerable parts of the body include elbows, heels, hips, ankles, shoulders, back and the back of the head—all areas that have skin close to the bone and little padding of body fat.

## Who is prone to pressure ulcers?

People who:

- ◆ Are bedridden, in a wheelchair or are unable to move certain parts of their body.
- ◆ Have fragile skin.
- ◆ Have a chronic condition such as diabetes or vascular disease that affects proper blood flow.
- ◆ Are malnourished.
- ◆ Have a mental disability from conditions such as Alzheimer's disease.
- ◆ Are older and less mobile.
- ◆ Are incontinent, which can aggravate skin.

## What does Silvercrest do to prevent pressure ulcers?

Good skin care—keeping skin clean, dry and examined—is a hallmark of our nursing care. All patients and residents are checked for early signs of pressure ulcers daily (early treatment is essential).

All residents are encouraged to move. Appropriate exercise programs are prescribed even for patients that find moving difficult. All immobile patients are physi-

cally moved every two hours or more. Additionally, items such as pillows and foam padding are used on patients that are at high risk and in areas that are especially vulnerable. Last, but not least, healthy nourishing meals are part of every resident's plan of care.

When Silvercrest residents are admitted to New York Hospital Queens, Silvercrest medical and nursing representatives routinely visit on site at the hospital those who are at high risk for pressure ulcers. A successful pressure ulcer collaborative between the two facilities has been established to guarantee continuum of care regarding the prevention of pressure ulcers.

## How are pressure ulcers treated?

Despite our vigilance, pressure ulcers sometimes do happen. As the well-regarded journal, *Advances in Skin & Wound Care*, concludes, "Pressure ulcers, a type of skin death, frequently occurs in persons with a heavy disease burden, especially those at or near end of life, despite good care."

Once a pressure ulcer is identified, steps are taken immediately to relieve the pressure on that area, to treat the sore with medication and proper cleaning and dressing. All attempts are made to halt the spread of infection.

## What can I do to help?

Let a nurse know immediately if you spot a reddened area on the skin that, when pressed, does not turn white. This indicates that a pressure ulcer is starting to develop. Never massage the area of the ulcer; massage can further damage tissue under the skin. Residents and patients should also be encouraged to keep as active as possible and to maintain good nutrition.