

Clinical staff have drawn up an advice check list to help people prone to pressure ulcers, or bed sores to self-manage their conditions at home. It's aimed at reducing the risk of developing pressure ulcers or having them deteriorate.

The move comes amid concerns some people are not seeking medical help because of fears around Covid.

Pressure ulcers are normally caused by people who are confined to bed or who sit in a chair or wheelchair for long periods of time. This could include patients recovering from illness or surgery at home.

Other vulnerable groups are older people with mobility problems and who have skin that's more easily damaged through dehydration, people who are obese, have urinary or bowel incontinence or a medical condition that affects their blood supply like diabetes, MS, kidney or heart failure.

The checklist includes advice on:

- regularly (hourly) changing position. (People unable to do this by themselves need to seek help from a relative or carer).
- daily checking skin for early signs and symptoms of pressure ulcers
- Seeking medical advice immediately if there is red, swollen skin, pus coming from the pressure ulcer or wound, cold skin and a fast heartbeat, severe or worsening pain or a high temperature. These symptoms could be a sign of a serious infection that needs to be treated as soon as possible
- Having a healthy balanced diet with enough protein, vitamins and minerals
- Stopping smoking as this causes damage to the blood circulation and can lead to pressure ulcers.

Dr Debbie Milligan from the Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) said: *"If you're recovering from illness or surgery at home, or you're caring for someone confined to bed or a wheelchair, you must keep a close eye out for pressure ulcers and act to prevent them or treat them swiftly if they appear.*

*"For some people they are an inconvenience but for others they can be serious and lead to life threatening complications like blood poisoning, so it's vital people follow the advice, and if they are worried they should ring their surgery and talk to someone there or have a conversation with their community nurse.*

*"People should be reassured that our health and social care teams take all necessary care to follow the Covid guidelines around wearing masks, washing hands, keeping socially distanced where possible and doing everything they can to keep their patients safe and reassured," she added.*