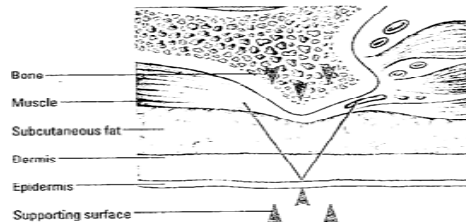


## What is Off-Loading?

Off-Loading is a term used in the wound care industry to indicate that attempts have been made to relieve or remove pressure from an area of the body. Off-Loading is required when there is a wound present or a bony prominence that is causing increased pressure. Off-Loading is also required when external forces, such as a cast or brace are increasing pressure or if a patient is wheel chair bound or on bed rest. The chair or bed can actually cause pressure to build under pressure points on the body if proper body mechanics and positioning are not maintained.

There are numerous types of offloading devices



that the wound healing center can educate you on. We will be happy to assist you in determining the most appropriate off-loading device for you. You are an important factor in healing your wounds. The benefits of off-loading are only achieved when these devices are used correctly and consistently.

## Different Types of Off-Loading Devices

There are too many styles and brands of off-loading devices to list in one brochure. Below is a list of the more commonly used devices that your wound healing center can assist you with

- Pillows or cushions
- Post-surgical shoes
- 1/2 or 3/4 soled walker shoe
- Splints, casts and walking boots
- Heel lifts or Heel boots
- Wheel chair cushions
- Specialty beds or mattress overlays
- Walker, canes or crutches



### Materials commonly used for Off-loading devices

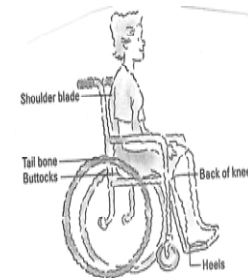
- Foam
- Gel
- Water
- Air
- Cotton (lining for casts & braces)
- Styrofoam or small glass or plastic beads
- AVOID donut-shaped devices as these have been

## How to Off-Load

proven to actually increase pressure

When using an offloading program, the first step is to follow the plan. If you have been instructed to wear a special shoe or use a wheel chair, walker or crutches, USE THEM! It has been theorized that taking one step directly on a wound can decrease your healing up to four hours. Therefore, if it is 6 steps (on your affected foot) to your bathroom, you have just decreased your healing by 24 hours!

If you are bed bound or chair bound and unable to change positions independently, it is imperative that a caregiver or family member assist you. For the bed bound patient, it is recommended that your position be changed at a minimum of every two hours. When sitting in a chair, the



pressure that is placed on the bony structures of your hips is increased nearly 30 times. Shifting your weight every 15 minutes and changing your position every hour will assist in the prevention of breakdown.

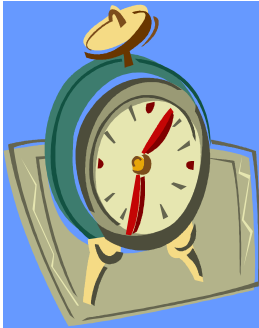
Whether lying in a bed or sitting in a chair, it is important to avoid sliding or scraping your skin across the surface during a position change to prevent unnecessary injury. Always use a lifting device or bed sheet to assist with position changes.

## How to Off-Load (continued)

When lying on your side in bed, place a pillow between the knees and/or ankles to protect the bony prominences from pressure.

Keep the head of the bed below a 45 degree angle to decrease the risk of sliding down in bed causing sheer injury.

To Off-Load the heels it is recommended that a pillow be placed lengthwise from knees



to ankles. Use 2 pillows if necessary and do not place pillows underneath the knees, the objective is to keep the heels off of the surface of the bed. This is called "floating" the heels.

If you have a reddened area that does not go away, a discoloration (bruise-like), or blister caused by pressure that has not begun to heal or has gotten worse within 5-7 days, you should contact the wound healing center.

**ProCare Healing  
Centers, LLP**

**We have the answers you are looking for!**

*Insert hospital name and or logo  
here*



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# A Patient guide to Off-Loading

**ProCare Healing  
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**Specializing in  
Outpatient  
Wound Care &  
Hyperbarics**