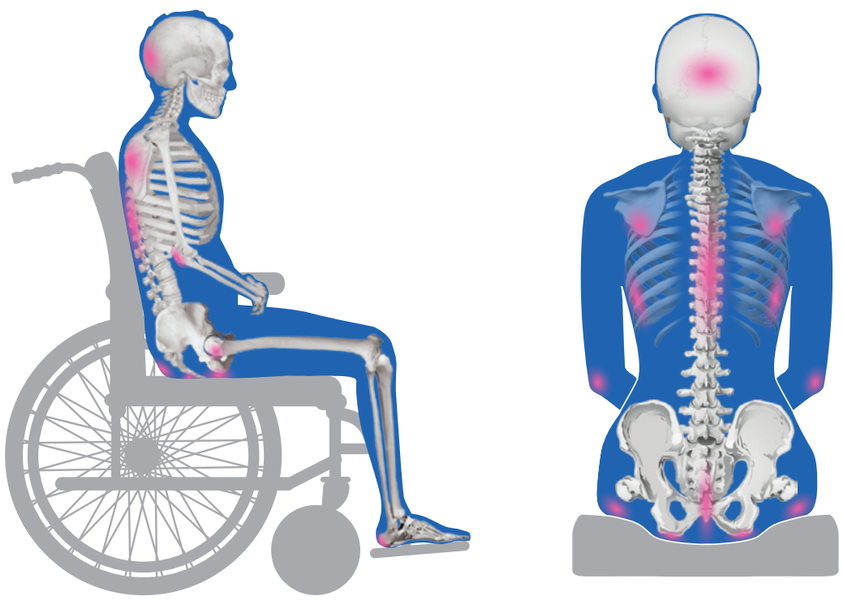
Skin Protection Basics

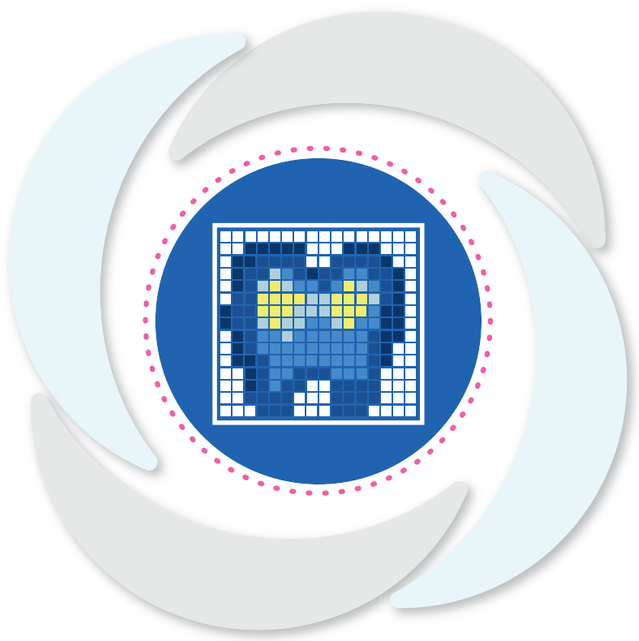
Support surfaces are specialised devices to protect the user's skin and reduce their pressure injury risk and/or progression. This is achieved through different methods of pressure distribution: immersion, envelopment and offloading. Different materials and designs offer varying amounts of these methods.



Mobility = Pressure Injury Risk

A holistic assessment and team involvement is required to consider all support surfaces and relevant intrinsic and extrinsic factors.

Extrinsic Factors



Scan to learn more about cushions and skin protection

permobil

Immersion

How deeply the body sinks into a cushion.

Sinking allows body weight to be dispersed over a greater area. This provides improved protection for skin and soft tissue.

Immersion = Load distribution = Skin and soft tissue protection

Envelopment

How much the cushion conforms and moulds to the body.

This increases the amount of surface contact area between the cushion and the individual. The more contact area, the more surface for body weight to be dispersed.

Contact area = Load distribution = Skin and soft tissue protection

Offloading

Redistribute pressure by reducing or removing pressure from one area (often the sitting bones) to another (often greater trochanters).

This places additional pressure on the soft tissues which are more able to tolerate pressure. Some cushions allow partial or full offloading of the sitting bones. This may be more important for current ischial tuberosity (IT) pressure injuries.

Offloading IT = Vulnerable area loading = Skin and soft tissue protection