

GROUP ONE-SUPPORT SURFACES

PURPOSE: Group One-Support Surfaces are mattresses or pads that are applied to the top of a bed mattress in order to reduce the pressure applied to the body. By providing a cushion to the bony parts of the body, these support surfaces can help prevent and treat the breakdown of skin.



TYPES: There are many different models and types of Group One-Support Surfaces. They vary in their construction, thickness, and pressure-reducing capabilities. The basic and most commonly used type is the foam mattress pad.

Foam mattresses (generically called Eggcrates) are sculpted or convoluted foam that adapts to the individual's body. Foam support surfaces are usually 2 – 3 inches thick and have a waterproof cover. These waterproof barriers protect the support surface from breaking down due to moisture. Many modern foam support surfaces have a top and a bottom and must be placed on the bed correctly.

Gel pressure mattresses are about 5 inches thick and have an impregnated gel that distributes the individual's weight across the liquid or solid gel. Gel also conducts body heat away from the person so that the mattress remains cool. Some models may leak if they become punctured.

Alternating pressure pads are air-filled mattresses that have chambers or cells that alternate inflation and deflation. This alternating of pressure relieves pressure either on a preset or custom-set schedule. These alternating pads require power and need to be protected from popping.

USE: Group-One Support surfaces are placed on the top of a mattress. The bed sheets are placed over the support surface — the individual does not lay directly on the pad. Just because there is a support surface in use, the need to turn the patient on a regular schedule is not removed. Some manufacturers develop special turning schedules for their support surfaces. The back of this form has an example of a patient turning schedule.

Alternating pressure pads are electrical devices and should be plugged into properly grounded electrical outlets. These units must also be kept clean at all times. When cleaning these units the electrical cord should be unplugged from the wall.

Patients that use support surfaces in the home should have home health professionals evaluating their skin on a monthly basis. These health care professionals will develop and implement an individualized program of skin care that should be followed.

MAINTENANCE: Most foam or gel support surfaces will breakdown over time because of the pressure of use. Most foam or gel support surfaces should be replaced every 6 – 9 months. The patient should constantly be checked to make sure they don't "bottom-out." Your health care provider will show you how to check for "bottoming out."

24-HOUR TURNING CLOCK

