

# HOPE HEALTHCARE and HOSPICE

## Caregiver tips for Avoiding Skin Breakdown

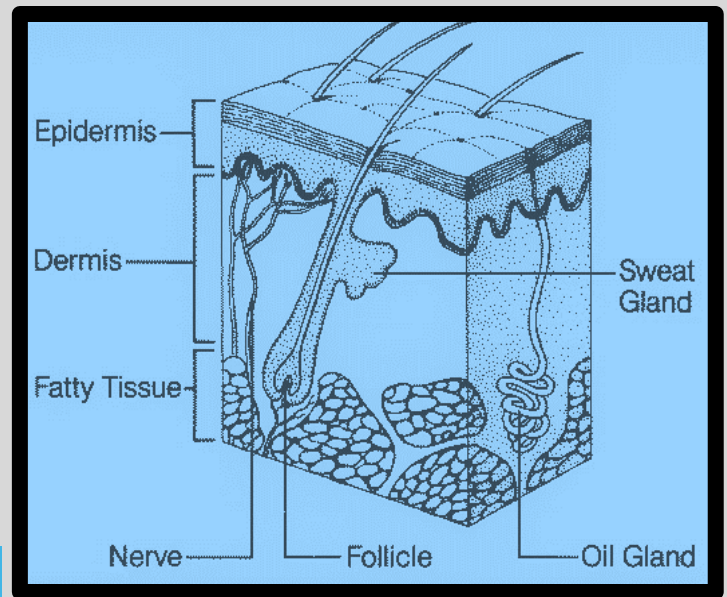
Our skin is the largest organ in our body and is always at risk of injury or breakdown. Older adults are at a higher risk because of the skin's aging process. As skin ages, circulation is reduced due to the junction between the epidermis and dermis thinning and flattening. If the layers of skin rub together or the skin remains stationary, tissue damage can occur, causing wounds. Notify your hospice nurse if you suspect a problem with skin breakdown.

### Causes of skin breakdown:

- Immobility
- Poor Nutrition
- Bladder and Bowel Incontinence
- Medications
- Hydration
- Impaired mental status
- Loss of sensation

### How to maintain skin integrity:

- Moisturize dry skin a minimum of twice daily.
- Avoid hot water during bathing; this will increase dry, cracked skin.
- Protect skin with a moisture lotion or barrier.
- Keep the head of the bed flat or below 30 degrees if tolerated.
- Use a mechanical lift for moving bariatric patients.
- Use draw sheets to pull up, transfer, and position the patient. DO NOT drag.
- Encourage a well-balanced diet and fluids.



Questions or concerns about Avoiding Skin Breakdown?

Call our hospice nurse at (337) 703-4674 or visit our website at [www.hope-hospice.com](http://www.hope-hospice.com).

