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The evidence used in the preparation of this leaflet is available on request. Please email: [patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk) if you would like a reference list.

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# The Lowzone Airzone Cushion *(page 1 of 4)*

## Why do I need a Lowzone Airzone cushion?

Your injury means that you may easily develop pressure marks and ulcers. You have been assessed as needing a specialist cushion to reduce the chance of this happening.

## Your Lowzone Airzone Cushion.

This cushion is made from different types of foam with an integrated air chamber, meaning it is lightweight and durable. The air chamber requires no maintenance.

The contoured seating surface of the Lowzone Airzone cushion gives stability and good weight distribution whilst helping overall positioning and support.

The Lowzone Airzone can be provided as a flat cushion or adapted to your own needs.

The cushion can be supplied with a built in wooden or plastic base, to prevent sagging when used with a foldable wheelchair.

Accessories e.g. a Seat Rigidiser (SR) may also be used with this type of cushion.

## Daily Checks

The Lowzone Airzone cushion needs minimal maintenance.

If someone else is doing these checks for you, you will need to tell them how to do it and make sure that they do it correctly.

Always check for loss of shape, wear and / or compression (this will help to provide sufficient padding under your bottom and prevent "Bottoming Out" of the cushion).

Various covers can protect the cushion depending on your requirements:

- a breathable outer cover that can be removed for washing with a stretchy thin plastic inner liner underneath (to protect the foam cushion)



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- a waterproof wipeable outer cover.

If a seat rigidiser is to be used this must be placed on the underside of the cushion inside the outer cover.

The seat rigidiser is designed to increase the lifespan of the cushion and help with overall posture by reducing the sagging of the foam base when the cushion is used on foldable wheelchair bases. This must be removed if used on a flat base as it can increase the interface pressure to your seating bones causing skin damage and instability.

Do not add a seat rigidiser if your cushion has a built in solid base.

Once you have finished checking or cleaning the cushion you will need to put it back together carefully.

### **Using the cushion**

The cushion has been designed to be used with the outer cover for maximum efficiency and may be used without the cover temporarily, e.g. whilst the cover is in the wash, but only if the inner liner is not damaged.

The inner liner can be used temporarily, however this should be for a shorter time period due to the increased risk of heat generation and moisture build up on your skin.

We advise you not to place an alternative cover on the cushion, such as a pillowcase or a towel, as this will affect the efficiency of the cushion and can cause skin marking.

It is at the discretion of your cushion supplier whether a spare outer cover is provided.

Depending on your requirements, a waterproof wipeable outer cover or a removable towelling outer cover can be provided as an alternative.

The wipeable outer cover and the inner liner are designed to protect the foam against moisture therefore the cushion must not be used without one of these covers.

If any of the protective covers become damaged it must be replaced. Should this happen, you must contact your wheelchair service or cushion supplier immediately.

If the cushion foam becomes contaminated due to incontinence, it should be replaced as the foam is absorbent and cannot be cleaned.

The outer cover has descriptive labels, which are also used as a handle, at the back of the cover and on the underside to enable correct positioning before use.

Do not expose your cushion to naked flames or long periods of extreme temperatures.

You should not store items under or to the side of your cushion because this could create a higher seating pressure and lead to pressure marks or ulcers. Sharp objects may puncture and damage the cushion.

Should this happen you must contact your wheelchair service or your cushion supplier immediately.

Be careful not to rip or overstretch the thin inner liner.

The contoured cushion has a raised area at the front to enable correct positioning before

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use. The outer cover has a handle and a zipper at the back.

It is vital that the cushion is not placed the wrong way round (not back to front or upside down) inside the outer cover. Placing the complete assembled cushion the wrong way round can cause significant skin damage.

The maximum weight limit of this type of cushion is 158.7 Kg / 348lbs.

Your skin can be badly damaged if the cushion is not used properly.

## **Cleaning your cushion**

The breathable outer cover can be machine washed on a 40°C wash cycle. Do not tumble dry.

The wipeable outer cover and the inner liner can be cleaned with a damp cloth and normal household detergent and wiped dry. Do not tumble dry the wipeable covers.

All types of replacement covers are available from your wheelchair service or the supplier of your cushion.

Washing instructions can be found on the label of the outer cover.

Do not immerse the foam cushion, with or without protective covers, in water.

Dry the cushion in open air. Do not place it in direct sunlight or in front of fires, radiators or heaters.

Never use bleach, alcohol products or oil based lotions to clean any parts, because they can cause damage to the cushion.

## **Pressure Relief.**

You may need to carry out pressure relief whilst sitting on this cushion. If you are not sure whether you need to do this, please contact the Pressure Clinic.

Pressure relief helps to keep the blood flowing in your seating area. This is necessary for healthy skin and helps prevent ulcers forming.

Pressure is relieved when the bony parts of your bottom are lifted clear of the cushion. To do this you can lift your bottom off the seat or lean side to side or forward and then back. If possible relieve the pressure every 20 minutes for 20 seconds.

## **Skin.**

You should check your skin for any damage before getting into your wheelchair and on going back to bed. When in bed if you have any red or pink marks on your skin you will need to relieve pressure from the area until the mark has completely faded.

If the mark is still there after 30 minutes, please contact the Pressure Clinic for advice.

New cushions are firmer than older ones, so you need to check you skin as often as possible when you get a new one.

## **Life expectancy of the cushion and how to replace it.**

The Lowzone Airzone cushion should last between 24 – 30 months, but this can vary

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depending on your weight and how active you are. The cushion is guaranteed for 2 years to be free from manufacturing defects.

To repair or replace your cushion contact your local wheelchair service or supplier.

If you are unsure of their address, please contact the staff at the pressure clinic who will be able to help.

## **How can Pressure Clinic help?**

We are available by telephone for advice, and you will also attend the Pressure Clinic during your Outpatient appointment to see your Consultant. Additional appointments can also be made for you to be seen in the Pressure Clinic should you so wish.

We can be contacted for addresses and telephone numbers of local wheelchair services, sales representatives for cushions and for advice on any aspect of your pressure area care.

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Please remember that this hand-out is only to be used as a guide and that each person needs to be individually assessed for a cushion. Once a cushion is prescribed it does not reduce the need for skin checking and continued assessment.