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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 Terra cushion*** (page 1 of 3)

### **Why do I need a Terra 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 Terra cushion.**

There are different types of Terra cushions available, all are all similar in construction.

Due to variations in the range it is advisable not to use a different type of Terra cushion until you have been assessed for it's use. Please contact the staff at the Pressure Clinic who will be able to help.



The cushion is constructed using moulded foam, which is lightweight and durable with a breathable water resistant outer cover for protection. A stretchy thin plastic inner liner may be used underneath the outer cover.

The Terra cushion provides stability and good weight distribution and helps positioning and support.

Accessories e.g. a Seat Rigidiser (SR) may also be used with all types Terra cushion.

### **Daily Checks**

The Terra cushion needs minimal maintenance.

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

Always hold the cushion by the base.

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

If a seat rigidiser is used, this must be placed on the underside of the cushion, before putting on the outer cover.

The seat rigidiser is designed to increase the lifespan of the cushion and help your posture by minimising 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, promoting skin damage / promote instability.

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

## **Cleaning your cushion**

Washing instructions can be found on the label of all types of the outer covers. Ensure the zipper is closed before cleaning.

The water resistant outer cover can be machine washed on a 40°C wash cycle with mild detergent and tumble dried on a cool setting. This helps to maintain the water repellent and fire retardant properties of the cushion cover, while preventing shrinkage.

The inner liner can be wiped cleaned with a damp cloth and household detergent or soap. Wipe dry or allow the cushion to dry in open air. Do not place it in direct sunlight or in front of fires, radiators or heaters.

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

Do not immerse the foam cushion (with or without protective covers) into water.

If the foam becomes soiled due to incontinence it must be replaced as the foam is absorbent and it cannot be cleaned. Contact your wheelchair services / provider for a replacement.

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

## **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, such as when the cover is in the wash, but only if an inner liner is used.

The outer cover and the inner liner are designed to protect the foam against moisture.

Using the cushion without the outer cover should be for short periods only, because of the increased risk of heat generation or moisture build up on your skin.

Do not store items under or to the side of your cushion because they could create a higher seating pressure, and lead to pressure marks or ulcers. Sharp objects may puncture and split the protective covers. Be careful not to rip or overstretch the thin inner liner.

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

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

The outer cover has descriptive labels underneath and at the back to enable correct positioning before mobilising.

Do not leave your cushion close to a naked flame or exposed to extremes of temperatures.

Do not bend the cushion as this will damage the foam properties.

The cushion has a raised contoured shape at the front to enable correct positioning before use. The outer cover has a zipper which goes all around the back and sides.

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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 user weight of this cushion is: 150kg / 330.7lbs.

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

## **Pressure Relief.**

You may need to carry out pressure relief 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 from 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 skin 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 your skin as often as possible when you get a new one.

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

The Terra cushion should last between 24 – 36 months, but this can vary depending on your weight and how active you are. The cushion is guaranteed for 2 years 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.

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