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

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The Varilite Proform NX Cushion (1 of 5)

Why do I need a Varilite Proform NX 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 Varilite Proform NX Cushion.

There are different types of Varilite cushions available, they are all similar in construction. The Varilite Proform NX cushion is designed to use inflated air and moulded foam to provide you with a lightweight and durable cushion.

The Varilite Proform NX cushion is made up of three main parts:

- Cover. An outer cover for protection and handling.
- Cushion. An adjustable air / foam flotation unit. The design of the Varilite Proform NX cushion allows the seating area to mould gently to the your body contours, distributing your body weight over the seating surface. The dual chambers allow side to side pelvic positioning.
- Modifiable contoured foam base. This is used in conjunction with the air/foam flotation unit to help with weight bearing on the seating area. A softer foam insert (thigh cushion) is attached to this base, in front of the flotation unit. A tapered wedge can also be used underneath the foam base.



Because there are variations in the range do not use a different type of Varilite 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 air valves.

The air/foam flotation unit is split into sideways dual compartments.

There are two independent air valves located at the front which inflate the cushion and are used to adjust it

The air flow is controlled by opening and closing the valves.

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Please see How to Adjust and Set Your Cushion for more information.

Daily checks

You need to check the cushion every day. 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 handle at the front or by the base.

Always treat the air valves with care. Rough handling may damage the valves and prevent operation of the cushion.

Always check for loss of shape, wear and compression.

Both air tubes must be attached down the sides of the contoured foam base.

If using the tapered wedge, ensure that it is correctly positioned underneath the base unit, inside the outer cover. The thickest part must be against the front of the cover.

To insert the wedge or contoured base: open the air valves on the flotation foam unit and squeeze out as much air as possible.

Close both air valves and place the cushion onto the contoured base, at the back.

Insert the combined foam flotation unit/contoured foam base and tapered wedge. When in position correctly, open the air valves to inflate the cushion again.

Descriptive labels are placed on the air/foam flotation unit and the contoured foam base to aid assembly.

If you suspect a puncture, remove all weight from the cushion, fully inflate it and close the air valve. Transfer back onto the cushion. If the cushion deflates with the air valve closed this indicates a puncture. Do not immerse the air/foam flotation unit in water, this will damage the cushion.

Contact your local Wheelchair Services or supplier of your cushion immediately to request a repair or replacement of this cushion. Repair kits are only available from the manufacturer of the Varilite Proform NX cushion, and are obtained by contacting the cushion provider.

How to adjust and set your cushion.

The lowest side of the pelvis should be adjusted first. Initially this can make you feel slightly unbalanced until both valves have been adjusted:

- Start with the cushion fully inflated. To inflate, open both the air valves by turning them anti clockwise. The air valves will “suck” air into the cushion and the cushion will become firmer.
- Close both air valves by turning them clockwise, and sit on the cushion.
- Open the appropriate air valve by turning it slowly anti clockwise to release the airflow. Listen for a change of pitch of the airflow and close the air valve quickly by turning it clockwise. This lowers your pelvis into the cushion. Air level is determined by the amount of support or stability you need as well as comfort.
- When you have adjusted the lowest side compartment, open the opposite valve and

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repeat the process.

- Do not release all the air from the cushion, because this will put you at risk of bottoming out
- Closing the air valves prevents any more air from escaping from the cushion when relieving pressure, shifting body weight or when pushing your wheelchair.
- If too much air has been released (from either air valve) you must restart from the beginning. This will involve getting off the cushion to allow airflow back into the dual sections.
- When finished with the cushion for the day, open both air valves by turning them anti clockwise. This allows the cushion to rest fully inflated with the air valves open overnight.

Cleaning your cushion

The outer cover can be machine washed on a 40°C wash cycle with mild detergent. It should be drip dried or tumble dried on a cool setting to prevent shrinkage. Washing instructions are on the label.

The air/foam flotation unit can be cleaned with a damp cloth and normal household detergent and wiped dry.

If the tapered wedge/contoured base or thigh foam cushion insert becomes soiled due to incontinence they must be replaced.

Contact your wheelchair services/provider for a replacement.

Never use bleach, alcohol products or oil based lotions to clean any parts of your cushion, they can perish the materials used in construction.

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

Using the cushion

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

To provide sufficient padding under your bottom and prevent "Bottoming Out", the cushion must be inflated and adjusted. This will help prevent skin marking/development of pressure ulcers.

The cushion must be reset each time you use it.

You must place the Varilite Proform NX cushion the correct way round on your wheelchair. The outer cover has a carry handle at the front, zippers at the back, and descriptive labels on the front of the cover to enable correct positioning before mobilising.

Both air valves must be visible at the front of the cushion to allow access for adjustments.

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

Do not store items under or to the side of your cushion as this will create a higher seating

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pressure, and lead to pressure marks or ulcers.

Sharp objects may puncture the air/foam flotation unit. Should this happen you must contact your wheelchair service or your cushion supplier immediately.

The cushion has been designed to be used with the outer cover for maximum efficiency. If the cover is damaged, it must be replaced.

Do not place an alternative cover on the cushion such as a pillow case, as this will effect the efficiency of the cushion and can cause skin marking.

A waterproof outer cover option is also available for this cushion.

Replacement covers are available from your wheelchair service or the supplier of your cushion.

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

Travelling in an aeroplane will effect the pressure inside the Varilite Proform NX cushion and over inflate the foam base unit. You may need to let a little air out of the cushion before take off.

Always reset your cushion as soon as possible after landing.

There is no maximum user weight for this type of cushion.

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

The thigh cushion insert

The softer foam insert (thigh cushion) can vary with older models of this type of cushion. Instead of a solid foam insert, a pad of mesh covered reticulated foam blocks is provided to support the thighs whilst protecting them from the harder contoured base.

These are breathable and washable with household detergent and air dried.

If any of the mesh blocks become soiled due to incontinence, the pad must be replaced.

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.

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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.

If maintained properly the Varilite Proform NX cushion should last between 2 – 3 years, 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.