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You are entitled to a copy of any letter we write about you. Please ask if you want one when you come to the hospital.

If you are unhappy with the advice you have been given by your GP, consultant, or another healthcare professional, you may ask for a second (or further) opinion.

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 Range of Vicair Back Cushions (page 1 of 4)

## Why do I need a Vicair back 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.

## The Vicair back cushion

There are different types of Vicair back cushions available, all of similar construction.

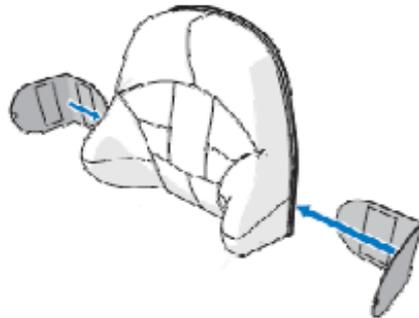
The Spinal Centre uses the following cushions from the Vicair back cushion range:



Matrix Elite Air back cushion



Multi-function back cushion.



Flex back cushion

Because of variations in the range it is best not to use a different type of Vicair back cushion until you have been assessed. Please contact the staff at the Pressure Clinic who will be able to help.



The Vicair back cushion range uses small plastic pyramid-shaped air pockets (Smart Cells), which sit on top of one another in closed compartments of the cushion.

The position of the compartments differ between the cushions in the range.

These cushions give stability, good weight distribution and help overall positioning and support. This design makes the Vicair back cushions lightweight and durable and can be adapted to suit your individual needs.

**Pressure Clinic**  
 **01722 429291**

Accessories such as additional side supports may also be used with the Flex back cushion. These are not used on the Multi-function back cushion or Matrx Elite Air back cushion.

## Before use

The range of Vicair back cushions must only be used on a fixed solid back support.

These cushions are protected by two covers: a breathable outer cover which can be removed for washing, and a waterproof wipeable inner cover. The inner cover is separated into different compartments which hold the Smart Cells.

A zipper is used around the outside of the inner cover so that smart cells can be removed.

Always check the inner cover for loss of shape, wear and compression.

Regularly check the condition of the zipper on the inner cover and, if damaged, seek replacement of cushion immediately. It is at the discretion of your cushion supplier if a spare outer cover is provided.

The outer cover protects the cushion. Always replace worn or damaged covers. Replacement covers are available from your wheelchair service or the cushion supplier.

If additional side supports are used with the Flex back cushion, place these between the inner cover and the outer cover at the sides of the cushion (as shown in picture on page 1) and ensure the cushion is assembled correctly before using it.

The side supports cannot be used without an outer cover.

## Daily checks

The range of Vicair back cushions need minimal maintenance.

If someone else is doing this for you, tell them how to do it and make sure that they do as you have told them.

Regularly check the Velcro strips are in a good condition to secure the cushion to the backrest.

Both the Matrx Elite Air back and the Flex back cushion have a flap at the top which must be folded over the top of the backrest.

Regularly check the inner cover and smart cells for signs of wear and tear or deterioration.

To prevent the cushion 'bottoming out', the air cells must be dispersed around the different compartments to provide sufficient padding under your bottom. To do this, gently shake the cushion before getting into your wheelchair each time.

## Using the cushion

You must place all Vicair back cushions the correct way round on your wheelchair.

The outer covers of the Multi-function back and Flex back cushions have a zipper at the back with descriptive labels on the sides and underside (at the back) of the cover to enable correct positioning before use.

The Matrx Elite Air back outer cover has a slot in the bottom to remove the inner cover.

Where applicable, ensure the flaps of the outer cover are folded over and secured to the contoured backrest parts.

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

Sharp objects may puncture and split the inner cover. Should this happen you must contact your wheelchair service or your cushion supplier immediately.

The zipper on the sides of the inner cover allows removal of the Smart Cells. A Velcro strip is used in the centre of the cushion to allow access to the middle compartment.

Smart Cells should only be added or removed from the cushion for specific reasons such as positional support or travelling.

It is important that you note how many Smart Cells are removed and from which compartment.

For guidance a label is provided on the recommended filling of smart cells in each compartment. This can be found attached to the bottom of all the back cushions.

If side support is not required, the smart cells can be fully removed from the side compartments and the inner cover tucked behind. This applies only to the Matrx Elite Air back cushion and the Flex Back cushion.

We recommend that all Smart Cells are inspected every 3 months. If a large number of Smart Cells appear deflated or damaged, discontinue use and contact your provider immediately.

You are at risk of skin damage if you add or remove any smart cells from the compartments without guidance or further assessment from a healthcare professional.

The maximum user weight limit for the Matrx Elite Air back cushion is 135 kg.

There is no maximum user weight limit for the other cushions in the Vicair back cushion range.

The Vicair multi-function back cushion and the Flex back cushion are not recommended for use when travelling in a motor vehicle.

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

## **Cleaning your cushion**

The outer cover can be machine washed on a 40°C wash cycle. Do not use bleach. Drip dry or tumble dry on a cool setting to prevent shrinkage.

Washing instructions are on the label.

The inner cover, additional side supports and smart cells can be cleaned with a damp cloth with household detergent and wiped dry. Do not immerse the inner cover in water. Ensure the smart cells are replaced correctly into the appropriate compartment.

If the inner cover becomes soiled due to incontinence it must be replaced. Contact your wheelchair services or cushion provider for a all types of cover replacement.

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

## **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 your skin as often as possible when you get a new one.

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

All Vicair back cushions should last between 3 – 4 years, but this can vary depending on your weight and how active you are. The cushions are 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.

## **How can the 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.

Pressure Clinic – ☎ 01722 429291

Please remember that this leaflet 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.