

CHOOSING THE RIGHT PRESSURE CARE MATTRESS



andway
healthcare in hand

There is a wide use of terminology used for pressure care mattresses including air/airflow mattress, alternating mattress, redistributing pressure mattress, replacement systems and dynamic mattresses to name but a few.

We take calls everyday seeking help and advice on which mattress to choose, graded into medium, high and very high risk usually, which will best suit a user. With nearly 20 years of experience in the care home environment we would like to offer the following which need to be taken into account.

SKIN ASSESSMENT

This will be carried out by a healthcare professional, usually following guidelines of risk assessment or scoring such as The Braden scale which will calculate a level of risk and this will then be matched to the appropriate risk rated mattress system.

PRESSURE CARE MATTRESS OPTIONS

STATIC OR FOAM MATTRESSES

Made from foam and usually feature a two way stretch, vapour permeable, waterproof cover which helps to reduce the shear and friction forces and prevent tissue breakdown. The internal air channels help to encourage skin integrity and reduce the build-up of moisture underneath the user.

These mattresses are predominantly used for those who may present with some minimal risks of pressure damage, classified as low or medium risk. Andway do offer a high risk version of this format of mattress.

ALTERNATING PRESSURE MATTRESSES

Alternating/Air Mattress systems offer advanced pressure relief therapy for patients rated high and very high risk. They normally consist of individual alternating air filled cells, usually working in small targeted groups to regularly and automatically alter distribution of pressure in sections, protecting the head area/foot and knee area and mid section area to maximum effect.

There is a choice of analogue or digital pump to activate these systems and controls provide pressure alerts and comfort settings 24/7.

Options can include evacuation kits, static pillows etc



HYBRID MATTRESSES

Combination of air and foam, providing a comfortable foam interface which reduces pressure over vulnerable areas of the body and an alternating surface beneath weight bearing sections of the body. These are used for those rated high or very high risk.

REPLACEMENT OR OVERLAY?

Alternating pressure mattresses are supplied as replacement or overlay, both provide the same level of pressure care: a replacement system is just as it sounds a full mattress system, an overlay fits on top of an existing standard mattress. We will of course offer help and advice on which is the best option for your service user.

SERVICE USER MOBILITY

Your service user is unique and will have their very own requirements and we encourage you to take the following into account when choosing a mattress:

- Will the service user be getting in and out of bed independently and frequently and if so will require a mattress structure which will allow ease of movement, including overall mattress height.
- If your service user is essentially immobile and will need patient lifting aid the mattress will of course need to be of a higher risk rating and comfort level, with alternating functionality built in.

BED AND BED ACCESSORIES IMPACT

- Which bed will the mattress go on, can it be securely positioned and fastened, if not, an alternative bed may be required.
- Check your bed accessories are compatible with the mattress. For example, do not use an alternating mattress with a separate profiling backrest as it may restrict the air-flow of the mattress.
- Check the height of the mattress vs required anti-entrapment bed rail requirements. From April 2018 government legislation stipulates the minimum gap between the top of the mattress and the bottom of the bed rail must be 120mm to avoid entrapment and your mattress may raise the mattress height and reduce this gap to below legal levels. Furthermore, the distance between the top of the bedrail and the mattress must be a minimum of 220mm.

COMFORT

A good night's sleep is vital for health and wellbeing so testing the mattress for comfort is key as an uncomfortable mattress which interrupts/prevents sleep will severely impact the users health vs pressure care considerations.

Andway offer a comprehensive range of pressure relieving airflow alternating mattresses, suitable for low, medium, high, very high and bariatric users. At the forefront of technology our aim is to provide you with choice and expert advice.

Where 'risk' categories are given, these are to the Waterlow scale and are for guidance only and we strongly advise calling our expert mattress team to help in selecting the correct combination of comfort and pressure relief.