# The Norton Scale

The Norton Scale is a risk assessment tool used in healthcare settings to determine the likelihood of patient decubitus ulcers (Pressure Ulcers). It assigns scores to various physical and mental conditions, activity level, mobility, and incontinence, with a total score used to indicate the patient's risk level. Scores of 14 or less rate the patient as "at risk" for developing a decubitus ulcer.

### Score Interpretation

- **14 or less**: Patient is at risk
- **15 to 23**: Patient is at increased risk
- **24 to 33**: Patient is at very high risk
- **34 or more**: Patient is at extremely high risk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical Condition</th>
<th>Mental Condition</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Mobility</th>
<th>Incontinence</th>
<th>Total Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Alert</td>
<td>Ambulant</td>
<td>Full</td>
<td>Not</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Apathetic</td>
<td>Walk/help</td>
<td>Slightly Limited</td>
<td>Occasional</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Confused</td>
<td>Chairbound</td>
<td>Very Limited</td>
<td>Usually-urine</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad</td>
<td>Stupor</td>
<td>Bedridden</td>
<td>Immobile</td>
<td>Doubly</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Score Breakdowns**

- **4**: Full
- **3**: Slightly Limited
- **2**: Very Limited
- **1**: Immobile
- **1**: Doubly
- **4**: Not
- **3**: Occasionally
- **2**: Usually
- **1**: Doubly

**Source:** Doreen Norton, Rhoda McLaren, and A.N. Exton-Smith. *An Investigation of Geriatric Nursing Problems in the Hospital.* London. National Corporation for the Care of Old People (now the Centre for Policy on Ageing); 1962. Adapted with permission of the publisher.