



UNDERSTANDING RESTRAINTS

A GUIDE FOR PATIENTS AND FAMILIES

While our goal is to avoid limiting the activity of individuals, it may be necessary, in some temporary situations, to reduce the risk of self-injury or injury to others. Limiting activity may be necessary to give patients the treatment they need when they are not capable of making decisions and cannot cooperate with their care. This brochure is designed to explain how and why we do restrain, the alternatives we use before and what family and friends can do to help.

WHY WE RESTRAIN

Patients are restrained to *reduce the risk of injury to themselves or others*. Restraints may help:

- Keep patients from pulling out tubes and lines.
- Limit activity during procedure.
- Remind patients that they need help in getting up.
- Keep patients from harming themselves, health care workers, other patients or visitors.

ALTERNATIVES FIRST

When a possible restraint situation arises, members of the health care team first try to use *alternative methods or interventions to prevent harmful behavior*. We check for reasons that might cause a patient to be confused or agitated: for example, hunger, thirst, toileting needs, pain and reaction to medication. We try to make the individual as comfortable as possible by adjusting lighting, temperature, noise levels, etc. If patients are confused, we try to find activities that help reduce confusion, such as a favorite TV program or music they enjoy. We may provide simple activities or tasks for them to do, like folding towels, to keep their hands busy so they don't pull at lines or tubes. In some cases, we attempt to use bed or chair alarms to let staff know when a patient is trying to get out of bed or up from a chair when it is not safe for them so alone.

WHAT FAMILY AND FRIENDS CAN DO

Family and friends can help us reduce the need for use of restraints or assist in relaxing the restrained patient by:

- Bringing objects from home such as photographs or familiar items that may be comforting to them while they are in the hospital.
- Visit often and reassure the patient in a calming manner.
- Explain the reasons for restraints to the patient.
- Leave telephone numbers where you can be reached, in the event that the health care team believes your presence would be beneficial to the patient's comfort or peace of mind.

WHEN RESTRAINTS BECOME NECESSARY

If alternative methods are not successful, the health care team may restrain patient in *the least restrictive way for the shortest time possible*.

DURING RESTRAINTS

Members of the health care team frequently check on the patient who is restrained to ensure safe care. They check breathing, circulation, and skin. When medically appropriate, patients are regularly offered food, fluids, and the opportunity to go to the bathroom. Restraints are removed and reapplied as necessary. Restraints may be removed when staff or family/friends can stay at the individual's side and prevent the harmful behavior.

REMOVAL OF RESTRAINTS

As soon as the individual's behavior changes and a less restrictive device can be used or no restraint is needed, the restraint is removed.

If you have questions or concerns about restraints, please write them down and ask the healthcare team about them.

Primary Doctor _____

Primary Nurse _____

They can be reached at _____
(phone)