York and Scarborough Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

The Safe use of Bedrails

Information for patients, relatives and carers

ⓘ For more information, please contact:
please speak to a member of the ward staff

Introduction

Bedrails are a piece of equipment fitted to your bed to help prevent you from rolling from the bed. They are used to help maintain your safety, and are risk assessed for each individual whether they should be used. Bed rails are not always appropriate for everyone and have risks associated with them. Bed rails should not be used to prevent movement.

This leaflet will help explain the use of bedrails as part of your care whilst you are in hospital. Bedrails are not always used but they may be considered as part of your care. If you have any concerns or questions about the use of bedrails, then please ask your named nurse or a member of staff who is known to you.

What are the benefits of using bedrails?

The use of bedrails can have some benefits to you in that they will help reduce the possibility of injury to you from you rolling out of bed and could provide a sense of safety for you so that it could reduce anxiety. Bedrails are needed when you are transported in the hospital between wards to maintain your safety.

Are there any risks with their use?

Before bedrails are used as part of your care your staff will carry out a full detailed risk assessment to ensure that the use of bedrails is correct and appropriate for you.

By assessing the risk and using the bedrails correctly and appropriately, staff can ensure that the risk to you is as low as possible. Possible risks are dependent on:

- The type of bedrail used and the dimensions of the bedrail.
- The physical size, clinical condition and behaviour of the service user.
- The style and type of bed in use.
- The type and size of the mattress.

What are the risks?

Risks may include the possibility of you or a part of your body becoming trapped between the bedrails.

There is also to be an increase in any injuries you suffer as a result of falling when attempting to climb over the rails. There is also a risk someone will be unable to get out of bed and move independently which is restraint.

The potential risks will be taken into consideration before bedrails are used. The risk assessment process will help in this decision.

Will the use of bedrails be discussed first?

The decision whether to use bed rails as part of your care will be fully discussed with yourself and your carer where appropriate. Bed rails will only be used following this discussion and if the risk assessment shows that it is safe to do so. For some service user's alternative ultra-low beds may be considered to reduce the risk of harm associated with falls from beds.

Will the use of bed rails be reviewed?

The use of bed rails as part of your care will be constantly reviewed on a week to week basis.
If your circumstances change then their use will be reviewed immediately.

These regular reviews are to ensure that the use of the bedrails as part of your care remains safe and appropriate with minimum risk to yourself.

Can I request that bed rails are not used?

If you wish to request that bed rails are not used, you may speak to your named nurse or another member of staff known to you.

What if I become unhappy with the continued use of bed rails?

If you become unhappy with the continued use of bed rails, then you can request that they are removed from your bed.

Your named nurse or another member of staff will explain the continued risks for you as a result of not using the bed rails.

If you still request that they are no longer used, then they will be removed from your bed. A record of your request and the decision taken as a result of your request will be made.

Are there any alternatives to bed rails?

There are some alternatives to bed rails that could be considered when caring for you including ultralow beds to support service users who might be at greater risk of falling from the bed.

Your staff will always consider all alternatives to the use of bed rails and discuss these with you and your carer where appropriate.

If you have any questions or concerns about the use or safety of bed rails please ask a staff member for advice and information.

Co-sleeping in Inpatient Paediatric Wards:

The trust recognises that co-sleeping is common practice for some families in their home environment.

In the hospital inpatient paediatric setting however the Trust does not support co-sleeping in a hospital bed due to the increased risk of from bed rails and the potential risk of **sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)**.

Families will be informed of these risks on arrival to the inpatient paediatric ward as part of the admission process.

The Trust is committed to supporting families to remain with their families overnight wherever possible.

On paediatric wards, parents and carers will be provided with appropriate sleeping arrangements, such as a fold-away bed positioned adjacent to the child's cot or hospital bed.

If a child is found to be co-sleeping with a parent or carer in a hospital bed, the child will be asked to be safely returned to their own cot or bed.

Advice for carers, relatives and friends

If you feel your relative's condition has changed and the use of bed rails either needs to be considered or withdrawn, then please speak with a member of the ward staff.

We would ask that before you leave the bedside you:

- Replace the call bell if moved during visiting hours.
- Ask a member of the ward staff to raise bedrails if lowered during visiting.
- Ensure bed tables are in reach of the patient if it has been moved during visiting.
- This ensures the patient does not have to over stretch to reach items on their table.

Tell us what you think of this leaflet

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact
Emily Richards, Advanced Clinical Specialist Falls & Frailty, York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE, telephone 01904 721343 or email Emily.richards21@nhs.net

Do you need any help to access our services?

We have lots of ways to support you. Speak to the team involved in your care or visit our accessibility hub to find out more: www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/access



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