

Danbury Hospital Patient Education Sheet**Restraint Education Guide****What is a restraint and when would it be used?**

A restraint is any device that restricts freedom of movement or normal access to one's body. Restraints require an order from the physician like any other medical treatment. They are used as a last resort when no other alternative has been successful to protect a person who is medically and/or mentally compromised.

Situations in which restraints may be used as a last resort might include:

- Attempting to pull out medical equipment that is important to his/her recovery
- Attempting to pull out life sustaining equipment and no other means of protecting the device have been successful.
- Attempting to harm him/herself or others

Safety and protection are very important at Danbury Hospital. The healthcare team will attempt to use alternative measures to keep patients safe before considering restraint use.

The healthcare team will also assess for sudden confusion or delirium which can be caused by changes in medical condition, such as fever, electrolyte imbalances, medication reactions, and dehydration. Once these conditions are treated, confusion often lessens, eliminating the need for the restraints.

What alternatives are used to keep patients safe?

Examples of alternatives to restraints may include:

- Availability of a family member or friend to stay with the patient for reassurance
- Maintaining a tranquil environment by speaking calmly and in an understanding manner
- Soft music/relaxation television channel
- Chair and/or bed alarm
- Activities to distract or redirect behavior
- Reorienting the patient to surroundings
- Pain control
- Medications to reduce emotional distress
- Bringing the patient out to the nursing station for companionship
- Use of mitts to protect medical devices, wound dressings, and tubes
- Offering frequent snacks, fluids, and toileting

When will the restraint be removed?

Restraints are always removed as soon as the patient is safe to be without them. Restraints are also removed regularly to offer exercise, movement, nutrition, hygiene, toileting, and to check the condition of the skin under the restraint.

What can family do to help the patient?

Many times, when a family member is available to stay with the patient, his/her presence alone has a calming effect. The presence of a family member also helps to orient the patient and helps him to be aware of his surroundings. The hospital is an unfamiliar place for a person with memory loss or confusion. Medicines, invasive tests, and surgeries may make him more confused. Family members can help by doing the following:

- Stay with the patient for companionship
- Engage the patient in pleasant activities such as reading or conversation
- Provide information to the healthcare team regarding the patient's usual routine and habits—changes in routine may increase confusion
- Provide access to personal items from home, such as a favorite blanket, toiletries, or pictures of family members
- Provide the patient's glasses or hearing aids so that he can hear better and see his surroundings more clearly

Your help as the family member or caregiver is important to the healthcare team. Provide us with any information about the patient that may be helpful to limit confusion and agitation, such as:

- ✓ **Hearing, vision, or communication problems**
- ✓ **Issues with wandering, getting lost, or falls**
- ✓ **Suspicious or delusional behavior.**

Source:

National Institute on Aging/National Institute of Health. (2008). *Hospitalization happens: A guide to hospital visits for individuals with memory loss*. Retrieved 01/2009 from www.nia.nih.gov/Alzheimers/Publications/happens.htm

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