

## Nursing

# Bed rails

### How bed rails are used

Bed rails are attached to the sides of hospital beds to reduce the risk of patients rolling, slipping, sliding or falling out of bed. They should not be used to stop patients from getting out of bed, even if they might be at risk of falling when they get up or walk.

### Who decides when to use bed rails?

The staff caring for you will use a validated bed rail risk assessment tool to determine if the use of bed rails is appropriate for you.

The risk assessment may be repeated at different times during your stay in hospital. This depends on the length of your stay and any changes in your condition which may affect your needs. The outcome of the risk assessment is discussed with you, your family, carer or friend if appropriate.

### The benefits

Bed rails can help to reduce the incidence of patients falling out of bed, especially for:

- patients at risk of falling out of bed because of physical conditions affecting their strength or balance
- Patients whose treatment makes them very drowsy. Patients who are nursed on special air-filled mattresses to reduce the risk of pressure ulcers.



## Patient Information

Most patients who fall out of bed receive only small bumps or bruises, but some are seriously injured.

### The risks

Some illnesses can make patients so confused that they might try to climb over a bed rail and injure themselves. If there is a possibility that a patient will try to climb over a bed rail, it's safer not to use them.

If patients can stand and walk independently, bed rails would get in their way when getting out of bed.

### Alternatives to bed rails

There are many ways to reduce the risk of patients falling. These actions may be preferable to using bedrails:

- Moving the person into an area which can be more easily observed
- Staff providing increased observation or checks for patients at risk of falls.
- Using the ultra-low setting on the bed and ensuring the bed is at the lowest level after care delivery
- Use of a falls sensor alarm

If you have any questions about bed rails or preventing falls, please ask the staff in the Ward area.

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format, please ask and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke-free policy.

#### Document History

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