

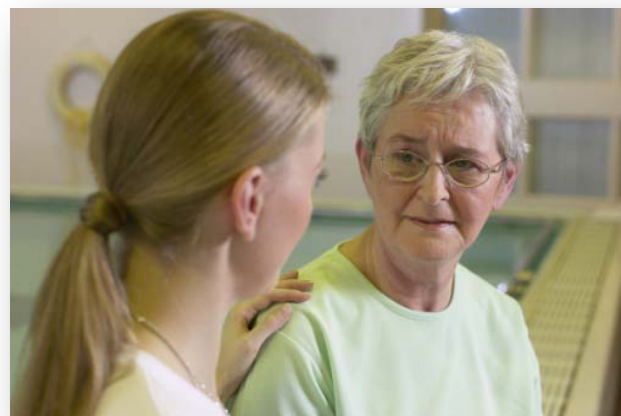
PATIENT SAFETY

In the past, healthcare facilities used physical restraints (such as vests, ankle or wrist restraints) to try to keep patients safe. Bed rails are also sometimes used as restraints. But restraining patients, even with bed rails, can be physically dangerous as well as emotionally harmful.

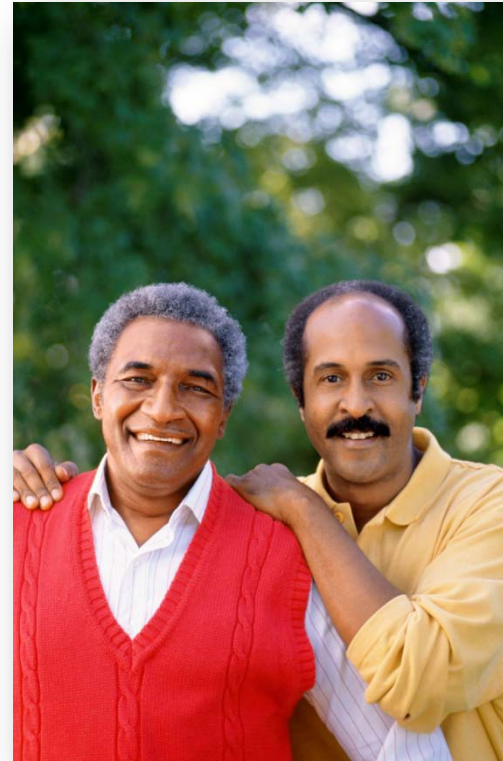
Hospitals, nursing homes and home healthcare agencies should pay close attention to every patient's needs and provide safe care without restraints. Families and caregivers need to also know about the risks of restraints and be willing to work with health care providers to help keep loved ones safe.

To make the best decision about keeping every patient safe, health care providers should pay special attention to the needs of patients with these problems:

- Memory
- Sleep
- Loss of control of bladder and bowel
- Pain
- Uncontrolled body movement
- Tendency to get out of bed and walk unsafely without help



Bed rails are not always necessary. This brochure can help you understand your choices and keep your loved ones safe.



For clinical guidelines outlining bed rails and options, visit www.fda.gov and search for "physical restraint."

To report a problem with patient safety, including a medical device problem, please call FDA's MedWatch Reporting Program at 1-800-FDA-1088.

**In this brochure, the term patient refers to a resident of a nursing home, any individual receiving services in a home care setting, or patients in hospitals.*



Oklahoma Foundation for Medical Quality
IMPROVING HEALTH CARE *Improving Lives*

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A FAMILY'S GUIDE TO BED SAFETY PROTECT YOUR LOVED ONES



FACTS ABOUT BED RAIL DANGER:

Between 1985 and 2009, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration reported:

830 incidents in which patients were caught, trapped, entangled or strangled in beds with rails

480 deaths from bed rail use

138 injuries from bed rail use

185 injuries or deaths prevented because healthcare staff did something to help



BED RAILS CAN BE DANGEROUS

- Healthcare facilities sometimes use bed rails to restrain people, often to keep them from falling out of bed.
- Bed rails are dangerous. People can become trapped and injured, even strangled on a bed rail.



WORKING TOGETHER FOR BED SAFETY

- Often, your loved ones can sleep safely without bed rails.
- Patients and families should work with their healthcare planning team to make the best choices for keeping safe.
- Healthcare providers and families should watch carefully and talk together to make sure a change to something new is comfortable and safe for your loved one.

BENEFITS AND RISKS OF BED RAILS

Benefits:

- Aiding in turning and repositioning within the bed
- Providing a hand-hold for getting into or out of bed
- Providing a feeling of comfort and security
- Reducing the risk of patients falling out of bed when being moved
- Providing easy access to bed controls and personal care items

Risks:

- Strangling, suffocating, bodily injury or death where patients or part of their body get caught between rails or between the bed rails and mattress.
- More serious injuries from falls when patients climb over rails.
- Skin bruising, cuts and scrapes
- Prompting agitated behavior when bed rails are used as a restraint.
- Feeling isolated or restricted
- Preventing patients who can safely get out of bed from performing routine tasks such as going to the bathroom, or getting something from a closet.

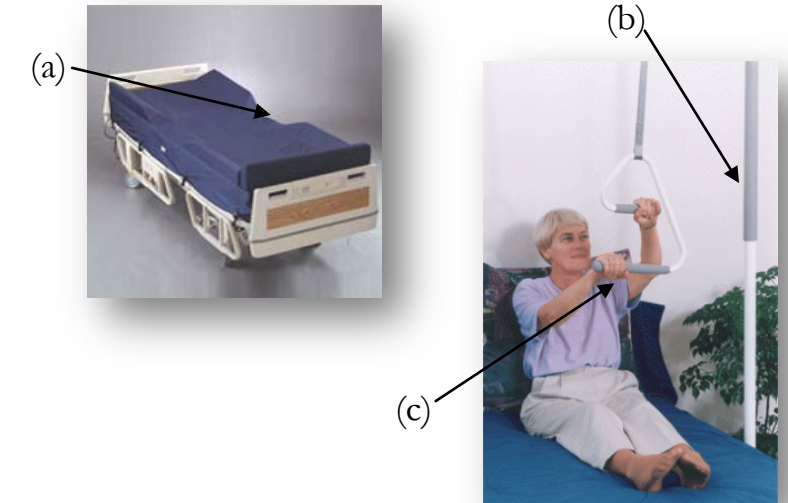
HOW TO KEEP SAFE WITHOUT BED RAILS

To reduce the risks of bed rails, look for safer ways to keep the person from rolling out of bed, help the person stay in bed, sit up or get out of bed on their own.

Healthcare providers and family members should watch patients closely and often for signs of risk or other needs.

Here are some ways to keep people safe in bed:

- Use bed wedges and raised edge (or scoop) mattresses (a) to keep the person from rolling to the edge of the bed.



- Place an object around the edge of the mattress to let the person know when they are close to the edge.
- Install bed bars (b) or bed canes to help the person pull up out of bed.
- Consider light head gear to protect the head in case of a fall.
- Use a trapeze (c) to help the person move in bed.
- Place items of interest, such as books, within reach from the bed.
- Expect that the patient will want to get out of bed (such as for food and fluids, going to the bathroom or to relieve restlessness or pain). Meet these needs by offering enough nourishment and bathroom breaks and providing pain relief.
- Use beds that can be raised and lowered close to the floor. Keep the bed in the lower position with wheels locked.

Even if your healthcare provider uses bed rails, you can still keep your loved one safe. Some suggestions include:

- Lower one or more sections of the bed rail, such as the foot rail.
- Use a proper size mattress with raised foam edges to prevent patients from being trapped between the mattress and rail.
- Reduce the gaps between the mattress and side rails.
- Avoid a full-length side rail, use either a quarter-rail or half-rail.