

Use of Restraints in Long Term Care

For Residents and Families

The Northern Health Region and the Long Term Care Philosophy promote the belief that the residents of Long Term Care Homes are entitled to enjoy freedom of movement in their surroundings. We believe that in order to preserve the dignity and autonomy of each person, that as much as reasonably possible, a restraint-free environment will be adopted. We support the philosophy of maximizing independence, dignity, individuality and the need for a safe and therapeutic environment.

The following information summarizes the Restraint Policy. You are encouraged to speak with a nurse for specific information related to restraint use and your family member.

A restraint is defined as any restriction or reduction of the resident's voluntary movement or freedom. This may be chemical (i.e. medication), physical (i.e. seatbelt or tabletop), or environmental (i.e. removal of mobility aid). A restraint is applied for the sole purpose of ensuring the safety of self and/ or others.

Do Restraints Keep Residents Safer?

The use of restraints has not shown to decrease falls or injuries. In fact, nearly all people fall at one time or another. In some cases, restraints actually increase the risk of injury in the event of a fall. For example, if a resident attempts to climb out of bed, they may climb over the rails, thereby increasing the height of the fall.

Restraints also may increase agitation in some people. Even if the resident knows they are restrained, they will still know they cannot get out of the chair and move independently. The frustration of not being able to act independently may cause agitation.

A chemical restraint may increase drowsiness and result in an unsteady gait,

therefore increasing the risk for falls.

Restraints are always used as a last resort after other solutions have been attempted. For example, if a resident is at risk for falling, better footwear, improved lighting, and more frequent checks by staff may be recommended to prevent the fall. Some alternatives to restraints are:

- Toilet routines
- Leisure activities
- Behaviour management, i.e.: redirection
- Walking and exercise programs
- Individualized seating
- Companion programs
- Universal Fall Precautions

However, should the need for a restraint be identified, a thorough assessment by the Multidisciplinary Team will be completed prior to the implementation of the restraint. The need for a restraint will be discussed with the resident, the family, or legal designate.

- A written or verbal consent is required by the resident, family, or legal designate.
- The use of the restraint is communicated to all staff by way of the Care Plan.
- Staff are required to monitor the resident's comfort and emotional well being as well as their safety and security while the restraint is in use.
- The need for the restraint will be reassessed on a regular basis as identified in the Care Plan.
- If admitted to a Personal Care Home with a restraint already in place, a comprehensive review will be completed within eight (8) weeks.



Possible Risks of Restraint Usage

Decreased independence
Decreased mobility
Pressure injuries
Muscle stiffness, risk of falls

Strangulation and choking
Loss of dignity, agitation
Incontinence
Death

Making an Informed Decision

When participating in the decision-making process as to whether a restraint is required for your family member, consider:

- Do the benefits outweigh the risks?
- Have you asked your family member how they feel about being restrained?
- Have you received all of the information required to make an informed decision?
- Has every alternative been tried; Is this the last resort?

Please note that in emergency situations, for the safety of residents and others, an emergency restraint may be applied without consent; family will be contacted as soon as possible.

Flin Flon Personal Care Home
Flin Flon, MB
204-687-9630

St. Paul's Residence
The Pas, MB
204-623-9226

Northern Lights Manor
Flin Flon, MB
204-687-7325

Northern Spirit Manor
Thompson, MB
204-778-3805

A copy of the complete Restraint Policy, CPS-02-EC.120 is available upon request.