



Patient & Family Guide

2022

Restraint Considerations for Patients and Families



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Restraint Considerations for Patients and Families

- A restraint is anything that limits a person's movement. Restraints can help to keep you from getting hurt or hurting others, including your caregivers.
- There are many types of restraints, including:
 - › A physical device (like a lap belt)
 - › Physically holding the person
 - › Medication(s) to calm the person (for example, if a person is confused and may hurt others)
 - › Using safe areas or rooms that give people space to calm down
- Nova Scotia Health's goal is to promote the health and well-being of all of our patients. We try to help you keep as much comfort, independence, and quality of life as possible.
- **Nova Scotia Health policy states restraints are to be used only as a last resort.** If you are at a higher risk for being restrained (for example, you are older, have decreased communication, or are withdrawing from medication(s)/alcohol), your health care team will make a care plan to try to avoid using a restraint.

Our goals:

- It is important to have a safe place where patients can get well and staff can work.
- Getting stronger and being able to do things on your own helps you get better faster.
- You and your loved ones should be involved in your care and in making decisions about the use of restraints.
- You have the right to informed consent (the health care team must clearly explain the risks and benefits of restraints).
- **You can say no to a restraint unless there is a serious risk of you hurting yourself or others.**
- **A restraint should only be used when other ways to keep you safe have not worked.**
- If a restraint is needed, it will be used for as short a time as possible.

There is a higher risk of injury and/or distress when a restraint is used. This is why we use the least restraint possible and remove restraints as soon as we can.

Why are restraints used?

- Sometimes people are alert and OK at home, but get confused when they get sick and have to go to the hospital. This change may be caused by:
 - › Their illness
 - › Surgery
 - › A new setting
 - › A change in their daily routine or sleep patterns
 - › Medication(s)
- Sometimes a restraint is used so that a person **does not**:
 - › Pull out a breathing tube
 - › Remove a catheter or tube that gives them medication(s) and fluids
 - › Get out of bed, fall, and hurt themselves
 - › Harm other people

Ways to help without using a restraint

The health care team has many ways to help without using a restraint. They may also ask you and your support person(s) for ideas.

- **Your health care team may try to avoid using a restraint by:**
 - › Having a support person(s) at your bedside
 - › Using a calm approach when talking with or caring for you
 - › Playing music
 - › Helping you keep a regular routine
 - › Helping you to exercise or walk more
 - › Making sure you are as comfortable as possible
 - › Making sure you are not in pain
 - › Reviewing your medication(s) (to lower the risk of confusion as a side effect)
 - › Using reminders (like calendars, pictures, or location signs) that tell you where you are

How can my support person(s) help?

- It can be calming for people who are restless or confused to have a familiar person or a comfort object (like a favourite blanket or a clock) nearby. This may help them rest and recover faster.

- You can help the health care team understand your loved one. This can help us to keep them safe. You may be asked to fill out a form to tell us about the person's likes, dislikes, interests, and life history. We encourage you to share any information that may help.
- You can also help by:
 - › spending extra time at their bedside.
 - › bringing in their favourite pictures, comfort objects, or keepsakes from home.
 - › sharing ideas with the health care team to keep them cared for and safe.

When are restraints used?

- We may not be able to keep you safe without using a restraint.
- You will need a restraining device if your actions show that you are in danger of hurting yourself or someone else, or if your actions are getting in the way of your treatment.
 - › Devices may include belts, mitts, and wrist and/or ankle restraints.
- Sometimes restraints are needed to give medical care.
 - › For example, if you are confused and moving around, but need blood drawn from your arm, a hands-on restraint may be used to hold your arm steady.

- **We will always use the least restraint possible.** When a restraint is used, nursing staff will keep checking to see if the restraint is still needed. They will stop using it or change it to a less restrictive (limiting) device as soon as possible.
- **If a restraint is needed, we will:**
 - › find out why it is needed.
 - › use the least restraint possible.
 - › change your care plan to help lower the need for a restraint.
 - › work with your health care team to find other ways to help.
 - › involve you and your loved ones in the care plan.
 - › watch you closely.
 - › stop using the restraint as soon as possible.
 - › keep giving you good care.

Questions?

If you are not happy with how you or your loved one is being restrained, talk with someone on the health care team. Please feel free to ask questions and share your concerns.

Notes:

Looking for more health information?

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here: <https://library.nshealth.ca/PatientEducation>

Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.

For more information, go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time: call 811 or visit <https://811.novascotia.ca>

Learn about other programs and services in your community: call 211 or visit <http://ns.211.ca>

Nova Scotia Health promotes a smoke-free, vape-free, and scent-free environment.

Please do not use perfumed products. Thank you!

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Prepared by: IPPL Least Restraint Working Group

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The information is not intended to be and does not constitute health care or medical advice.

If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

WT85-0599 © September 2022 Nova Scotia Health Authority

The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.