



About Restraints

Information for patients and families

Patient Safety

Your family member or friend's safety is a top priority for us at University of Washington Medical Center (UWMC). Sometimes patients who have been alert at home may become confused and unable to cooperate with their care and treatment.

This change may be caused by:

- Illness
- Surgery
- New surroundings
- Change in daily routine or sleep patterns
- Medications

Attempts to maintain patient safety without restraints are made if at all possible. The methods we use to avoid use of restraints include close staff observation, diversion, reassurance, attention to comfort needs, and rest. Sometimes family members or close friends are asked to help. We may ask you to stay with your family member or friend for short periods of time. Often the presence of a familiar person can help an anxious or confused family member or friend to stay calm or rest.

When These Methods Do Not Work

In some cases, the methods mentioned above are not enough to keep a patient safe. If your family member or friend may harm him or herself or others then restraints may be used to maintain safety. A common concern is patients pulling on their tubes and lines, which interferes with treatment and can result in serious injury if removed.

Questions ?

Call 206-598-4460

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns. UWMC Clinic staff are also available to help at any time.

Your Provider:

Phone #:

Restraints

In all cases the least restrictive restraint will be used. Restraints may include mittens, limb immobilizers or soft bands applied to wrists or ankles, to prevent tubes from being pulled out.

Special Care

The nursing staff will provide the special care and comfort, emotional support and attention to such needs as fluids, nourishment, use of bedpan, and changes in position that may be required when restraints are used.

UWMC Philosophy of Restraint Use

We make every effort to:

1. Prevent, reduce, or eliminate the use of restraints.
2. Intervene early in response to patient behavior that has the potential to lead to the use of restraints.
3. Use non-physical interventions as the preferred method for safety.
4. Limit the use of restraints to those situations in which there is risk of the patient harming self or others, including staff.
5. Discontinue the use of restraints as soon as possible.
6. Be aware of how the use of restraints may be experienced by the patient.
7. Preserve the safety and dignity of the patient when the use of restraints is required.

Please talk with the health care provider or nurse caring for you or your family member if you have questions. We are happy to talk to you about your concerns.

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
MEDICAL CENTER
UW Medicine

Patient Care Services

Box 356153

1959 N.E. Pacific St. Seattle, WA 98195
206-598-4460