Restraint Considerations for Patients and Families

At Capital Health our goal is to promote health and well-being for all our patients. It is our desire that patients maintain as much comfort, independence and quality of life as possible and therefore we practice care in a least restraint setting.

We believe that:

- It is important to have a safe place where our patients can get well and where our staff can work.
- Getting stronger and being able to do things on your own helps you get well faster.
- A restraint should be used only when other ways to keep you safe have failed.
- You and your family should be involved in your care and in making decisions about the use of a restraint.
- You can say no to a restraint unless there is a serious risk of you hurting yourself or someone else.
- Using a restraint may increase the risk of injury and/or agitation.

- If a restraint is needed, it will be used for as short a time as possible.

What is a restraint?
A restraint is any device used to place a person under control to prevent serious harm to that person or to another person. We will use the least physical means or medications possible taking into account the condition of the patient.

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Prepared by: Suzanne Hennessey RN, BScN
Adapted with permission: Woodstock General Hospital, ON
Designed and Printed by: CH Audio Visual and Printing Departments

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Why are restraints used?
Patients who have been alert at home may become confused and unable to assist with their care and treatment when they are ill. This change may be caused by illness, surgery, a new setting, a change in daily routine or sleep patterns, or medications.

Ways to help you without restraints
The health care team knows of many different ways to help you without having to use a restraint. You and your family may be asked for ideas. Some ways to avoid using restraints are:
• Having family at the bedside.
• Exercising or walking more.
• Music.
• Looking for signs of pain or physical discomfort.
• Using a calm approach and giving support.
• Keeping a normal routine.
• Reviewing medications.
• Using reminders such as signs.

How family and friends can help…..
Often having a familiar person or object with patients who are restless or confused can have a calming affect. This may help them rest, and regain their health. Also your understanding of the patient can help us to keep him/her safe. The health care team may let you know how you can help:
• spend extra time at the bedside.
• bring in much loved pictures, objects (such as a favourite blanket, clock) or keepsakes from home.
• offer your ideas for keeping him/her cared for and safe.
• have a sitter stay with the patient when family and friends are not able to be there.

If these ways are not helping
We may not be able to keep you safe without using restraints. A restraining device will be needed if your actions show that you are in danger of hurting yourself or someone else, or your actions are getting in the way of your treatment. These devices may include belts, side rails, mitts, wrist and/or ankle restraints.

If a restraint is needed, we will:
• try to find out why it is needed.
• work with everyone on the health care team to find other ways to help.
• keep you up to date.
• use the least restraint possible.
• keep a close watch on you.
• stop the restraint as soon as possible.
• carry on giving you good nursing care.

Questions?
Please feel free to ask the health care team any questions or share your concerns.
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We will always use the least possible restraining device. When a restraint is used, the nursing staff will repeatedly reassess the need for the device. They will stop it or change it to a less restrictive device as soon as possible.

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