

Bed rails

Birmingham Hospice aim to take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and the independence of the people who use our services and respects their rights to make their own decisions about their care.



What are bed rails?

Bed rails are metal frames that are attached to the side of the bed. These may be integrated and part of the bed itself or external and need to be fitted on to the bed. There are different types of bed rails depending on the bed and individual needs.

We aim to ensure that bed rails are used, when appropriate, to reduce the risk of

patients accidentally slipping, sliding, falling or rolling out of bed, and that bed rails are not used inappropriately as a form of restraint.

When you first arrive at the hospice we will assess if bed rails are needed and review any decisions around this regularly during your stay and particularly if your needs change.

Why might I be offered bed rails?

Bed rails may be used if:

- Your balance or safety in the bed is affected by your illness, condition or medication you are receiving.
- If you have fallen out of bed before, either here, at home or in the hospital.
- If due to your illness you have difficulty moving.
- At your request to give you a feeling of security, provided you have capacity and are well enough to make this decision. You should, however, still be able to move in bed and ask for help when you need to get out of bed.

Why might I be safer without bed rails?

Recent research suggests that although bed rails might make you feel safe, they can actually create problems.

For instance:

- If you try to climb out of bed over the bed rails you could fall from a greater height and have a greater risk of injury.
- You may trap your arm or leg, or injure yourself by trying to get out from the side.
- Bed rails may restrict your ability to get in and out of bed.
- Bed rails may make it more difficult for you to move and therefore restrict your independence.

We assess all our patients for the safe use of bed rails. If it is unsafe for us to use bed rails there are other options that we will discuss with you.

For example:

- Altering the bed height to its lowest level.
- Moving your bed to another area of the ward, so we can observe you more easily.
- Changing your bed to an ultra-low bed that lowers almost to floor level with mats either side of the bed to reduce risk of injury if you should roll or fall from the bed.
- Having someone stay with you, such as a relative or friend whilst you settle in bed.

What if I still want bed rails?

If after a full discussion of the risks you still feel that you need bed rails we can arrange this provided you have mental capacity to make this decision and that you are well enough to do so, your decision will be documented in your records.

If you have any questions or concerns please speak to a Nurse, Doctor, Physiotherapist or Occupational Therapist.

References

1. National Patient Safety Agency, 2007, Bedrails – Reviewing the evidence A systematic literature review <http://nrls.npsa.nhs.uk/EasySiteWeb/getresource.axd?AssetID=61400>
2. Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency(MHRA) (2020) The Safe Use of Bed Rails:
3. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bed-rails-management-and-safe-use>
4. Mental Capacity Act. 2005: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/9/pdfs/ukpga_20050009_en.pdf