

Bed rails information for patients, families and carers



What are bed rails?

Bed rails are full-length rails, which are the length of the bed. They are designed to reduce injury from falling or rolling out of bed. They have padded covers which are known as bumpers or sometimes 'cot sides'.

Bed rails work best for people who tend to accidentally fall or roll out of bed and who don't usually need to get out of bed during the night.

Should everyone have them fitted?

No. Sometimes bed rails can cause other problems, so patients need to be assessed individually to decide if they are safer with or without bed rails. The assessment process will be explained to you, and you may ask any questions of the professional undertaking it.

Bed rails can be fitted along the side of a hospital-style bed between the head and footboards.

Who are they not suitable for?

- People who may be confused, disorientated or restless, and who might try to climb over them.
- People who may get part of themselves trapped in the rails, and be unable to free themselves.
- People who may not be able to move their face away if they have rolled into the bumper.
- Bed rails must never be used to restrain someone who wants to get out of bed, or to stop someone from wandering at night.

How do I know I should have them?

The healthcare professionals who are involved in providing your care will complete an assessment of your needs and any possible risks. You and your carer will be fully involved with the assessment and it will only be carried out and rails provided if you consent. If the outcome of the assessment is that bed rails are not suitable for you, you and your carer will be given an explanation of the reasons.

What happens if bed rails are not suitable for me and I'm still worried that I might fall out of bed?

The healthcare professional who completes the assessment will look at other ways of minimising the risk of injury to you from falling or rolling out of bed. They will take into account your individual needs and circumstances. They may suggest a change in routine (e.g. to make nighttime toileting easier to manage) or lower your bed if possible. Your healthcare professional will advise you if appropriate alternative equipment is needed.

Maintenance of bed rails

- The bed rails have been fitted to ensure your safety. Please do not adjust the positioning.
- Bed rails must remain secured as per the manufacturer's instructions.
- They must always be used with bumpers.
- Bed rails should be checked every time they are used to see that they are still in good condition.
- Always check that the bed rail hasn't moved from the position it was in when it was fitted.
- Make sure the bumpers are fitted properly and are not ripped or frayed.
- Report any rust or flaking chromium to a healthcare professional.
- Check for missing or loose fixing or joints, or if anything is bent.
- If there are any clamps, check that they are tightened securely.

Bed rails will be removed if you no longer need them and returned to the loan stores. If the mattress changes for any reason, please contact a healthcare professional immediately.

Please remember

Any equipment prescribed is given over into your care and should be treated with respect and used only as explained. The hospice cannot be held responsible for any misuse of equipment.

All changes of circumstances should be reported to the hospice to ensure continued safe usage. If you need any more information about how to use your bed rail safely, please contact the supplier or your Occupational Therapist or Physiotherapist at Birmingham Hospice.

Birmingham Hospice: 0121 465 2000

Birmingham Medequip: 0121 503 8850

Sandwell: 0121 569 3670

Solihull Elms: 0121 329 0900

Staffordshire Medequip: 01785 273 950

Walsall Stores: 01922 604950 or 01922 604957

Worcester Equipment Loan 01905 520833