

## How can family members help?

- ❖ Share information about your loved one with staff. Past interests, hobbies, previous occupation, likes and dislikes, sleep and behavior patterns, and eating habits all help the team develop an individualized plan of care that reduces the need for restraints.
- ❖ Spend time with your loved one if and when feasible. You can be an extra pair of eyes and hands. You also provide the relationship that maintains his or her sense of identity.
- ❖ Bring items from home that provide comfort for your loved one, especially when he or she is getting used to new surroundings. Such items might include a favorite blanket, pictures, books, a photo album, or favorite foods. Nursing home staff will work with you on the appropriateness of items.
- ❖ Educate yourself on the risks and benefits of restraint use. Ask yourself, "Would I want to be restrained?"
- ❖ Work with nursing home staff as a team member. Your concern, interest, and input are invaluable in providing the best possible quality of care for your loved one.



# REDUCING RESTRAINT USE IN NURSING HOMES

A Guide for Residents and Families



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**Kansas  
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## What is a Restraint?

A restraint is any device that is used to keep a person from moving about or reaching a part of his or her body and is difficult for that person to remove.

*Examples include:*

- Siderails
- Lapbelts, cushions or trays
- Wrist/ankle bindings
- Vests
- 'Geriatric' chairs

## Federal Law states:

A restraint is "any manual method or physical or mechanical device, material, or equipment attached to or adjacent to the resident's body that the individual cannot remove easily, which restricts freedom of movement or normal access to one's body."

(Federal Nursing Home Reform Act-OBRA '87).

## What are the complications of restraint use?

- Falls
- Loss of dignity
- Increased anxiety or agitation
- Loss of mobility (weakened muscles)
- Stiff joints and/or weak bones
- Pressure sores
- Loss of bladder control
- Constipation
- Pneumonia
- Depression
- Entrapment
- Asphyxiation/strangulation
- Death

## Myths and Facts about Restraints:

### ***Restraints prevent injuries from falls.***

Restraints do not prevent falls and may actually cause increased injury with a fall.

### ***The nursing home has a moral responsibility to safeguard their residents with restraints.***

The nursing home has a responsibility to provide care and services that attain the highest physical, mental, and psychosocial well-being for each resident. This may or may not include restraint use.

### ***Residents feel more secure when restraints are used.***

No one likes feeling trapped or helpless. Anxiety, humiliation, and hopelessness often accompany the use of restraints.

### ***There are no alternatives to using restraints.***

There are many other things nursing home staff can try before using restraints. Most nursing home residents can be cared for safely without restraints.

### ***The nursing home must honor a family member's request to use restraints for their loved one.***

Physical restraints may not be used if they are not ordered by a physician to treat a medical symptom. The care team, including the family, should determine the best plan of care to enhance all aspects of the resident's quality of life.

## What is Quality of Life?

Quality of life is what makes life worth living for an individual. It refers to dignity, comfort, and happiness. It involves individual autonomy and ability to make choices to the greatest extent possible. It includes the freedom to move about and interact with others. It fulfills the need to maintain relationships and preserve one's sense of identity.

## What are some alternatives to using restraints that will reduce risk of injury and maintain quality of life?

- Appropriately lowered beds
- Appropriate seating
- Physical or occupational therapy
- Exercise programs
- Wedge cushions
- Wheelchair modifications
- Individualized toileting schedules
- Individualized rest periods
- Keeping personal items within reach
- Appropriate footwear
- Appropriate lighting – day and night
- Supervision of whereabouts
- Anticipation of needs
- Opportunities for interaction with others
- Activities based on interest and abilities