

About Behavioral Restraints

Keeping patients safe

When does the hospital use restraints?

When a patient is admitted to the Inpatient Psychiatric Unit, our staff talks with the patient, their family, or other significant people in the patient's life about ways to help the patient control their behavior. We can then use these methods at times when the patient may need to increase control over unsafe behaviors.

Rarely, we may use restraints to help keep patients safe. Restraints are only used if:

- We have tried other less restrictive measures without success.
- The immediate safety of the patient or unit is under threat.

Restraints are **never** used as punishment or because we are short of staff.

What happens when a patient is placed in restraints?

When a patient is placed in restraints, the nursing staff:

- Observes the patient at all times
- Meets the patient's need for comfort, emotional support, fluids, nourishment, use of bedpan, and changes in position
- Checks the restraints often to make sure they are not affecting blood flow

We review all restraint episodes with the patient. We ask for their input about where improvements might have been made. We also ask for their feedback on the use of restraints.



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UWMC Philosophy on Using Restraints

We make every effort to:

- Prevent, reduce, or eliminate the use of restraints
- Intervene early to patient behavior that could lead to the use of restraints
- Use non-physical interventions first
- Limit the use of restraints to those situations where the patient is at risk of harming themselves, staff, or another person
- Stop the use of restraints as soon as we can
- Be aware of how the patient may feel about the use of restraints
- Preserve the safety and dignity of the patient when we need to use restraints

If you have questions or concerns about restraints, please talk with the healthcare provider or nurse caring for you or your loved one. We are happy to talk with you.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

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