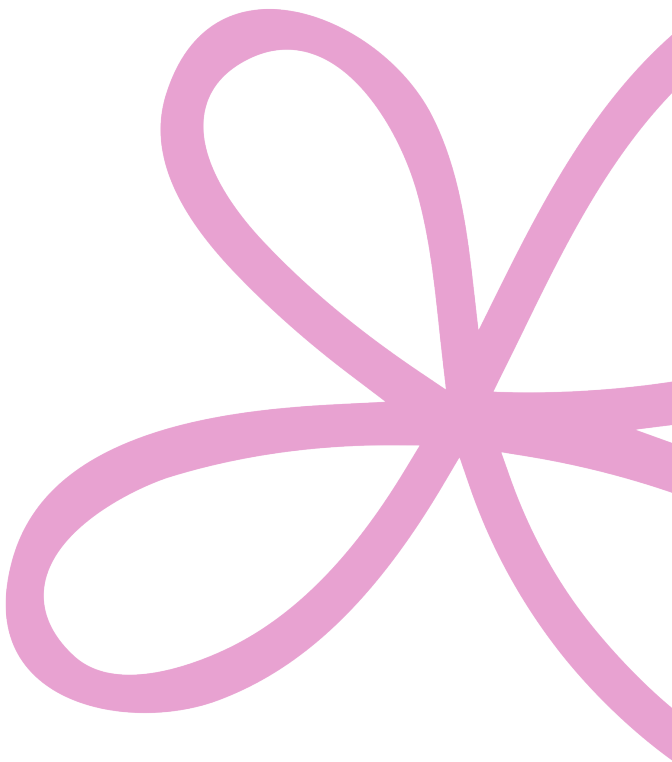


BED RAILS



Birmingham St Mary's Hospice aims to take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and the independence of its service users, and respects the rights of service users to make their own decisions about their care.

We aim to ensure that bedrails are used, when appropriate, to reduce the risk of patients accidentally slipping, sliding, falling or rolling out of bed, and that bedrails are not used inappropriately as a form of restraint.

“Neither elimination of bedrails, nor routine bedrail use, is appropriate. Decision making on bedrails needs to be based on an assessment of risks and benefits as they apply to individual patients.” (NPSA, 2007*).

What are bed rails?

Bed rails are metal frames that are attached to the side of the bed.

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.

*National Patient Safety Agency, 2007, Bedrails – Reviewing the evidence A systematic literature review
<http://nrls.npsa.nhs.uk/EasySiteWeb/getresource.axd?AssetID=61400>

- if due to your illness you have difficulty moving
- at your request to give you a feeling of security. 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:

- someone trying to get out of bed with bed rails may try to get over the rail and fall from a greater height
- 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 when there are other options that we are happy to 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
- 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 and 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.

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