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## *Information for You from Your Health Care Team*

### **Physical Restraint**

#### **Information for Family and Friends**

At University Hospital, efforts are made to use alternatives first before restraining a patient. Patient's comfort and safety comes first before using a device to restrict a patient's movement.

#### **What is a Physical Restraint?**

A physical restraint is a device used to restrict a person's freedom of movement for the purpose of protecting the person or others from injury. The most common types of physical restraints are belts and soft wrist restraints. These are used to keep a patient in a bed or chair.

#### **Why Use a Physical Restraint?**

Physical restraints are used to:

- Prevent injury to family members and staff, or
- Prevent patients from pulling out tubes or taking off dressings.

There are many reasons why patients try to pull out tubes or lines or get out of bed without assistance. Some reasons are confusion due to a new environment, illness, or medication.

#### **How Long Will a Patient Need Physical Restraints?**

The length of time that physical restraints are in place depends on how well the patient understands and is able to follow simple commands. The staff will remove the restraints every two hours to move the patient, to give skin care, toilet, and exercise.

#### **Who Decides to Place Physical Restraints?**

Physical Restraints are only used after the nurse or doctor makes a careful assessment. Patients are checked often. Restraints are used on patient needs. All options are considered before applying restraints.

#### **How Can I Be Assured that Someone is Safe While in a Physical Restraint?**

Nurses and others will frequently check the patient's safety and comfort.

#### **How Can YOU Help?**

You can help by telling the patient:

- Who you are,
- What day and time it is,
- Where they are, and
- Why they are in a restraint

When speaking, use simple sentences or one-word phrases. Read current news articles to keep them aware of their surroundings. Place a calendar or clock within sight to help the patient be aware of the date and time. Remind the patient to drink fluids as allowed by diet. Hot drinks can cause burns.

At University Hospital, physical restraints are only used when it is necessary to prevent a patient from seriously injuring himself/herself or others. If you have any questions, please ask.