Patient Information Sheet for Bed Safety Rails

## How Bed Rails Are Used?

Bed rails are attached to the sides of hospital beds to reduce the risk of patients rolling, slipping, sliding or falling out of bed. They cannot be used to stop patients getting out of bed, even if they might be at risk of falling when they walk.

## Who Decides When to Use Bed Rails?

A bed rail risk assessment is undertaken for all adult patients to consider if bed rails will be required or are suitable, and will be undertaken in conjunction with the patient if they can decide. If they are too ill to decide for themselves, hospital staff will decide after first completing an assessment, and again in conjunction with the patient’s relative. Bed rails are used if the benefits are greater than the risks.

## The Benefits

Some patients fall out of bed because their illness affects their balance, or their treatment makes them very drowsy. Some patients need special air-filled mattresses to reduce the risk of pressure sores, which can be easier to roll off accidentally. Some patients have electric beds with controls they use to move from lying down to sitting up. These beds can be very comfortable, but some patients are at risk of falling when they use the controls to change their position. Most patients who fall out of bed receive only small bumps or bruises, but some patients are seriously injured. Bed rails may help in the prevention of such accidents.

## The Risks

Some illnesses can make patients so confused that they might try to climb over the rails. If there is a possibility that a patient will try to climb over a bed rail, increasing the risk of falls and subsequent injury, it is safer not to use them.

If patients are independent, bed rails would get in their way.

If patients are very restless in bed, they can knock their legs on a bed rail or get their legs stuck between the bars. Padded covers can reduce this risk.

In hospital, all bed rails should be checked prior to use to reduce the small risk of patients getting trapped between the bed and the bed rail.

***Further Information***

If further information is required please ask the staff on the ward.