

Calvary Community Care Bed Sticks/Poles



Occupational Therapy Australia recommends that an occupational therapist should always be involved in assessing clients and environments for bed stick/pole suitability to minimise risk.

Do bed sticks/poles pose a risk?

Bed stick and poles have traditionally been used in settings where people are receiving care. The provision of bed sticks/poles is primarily to aid bed transfers and bed mobility. Bed sticks/poles are a readily available assistive technology.

Bed rails have historically been used to prevent people falling off the bed, however more recent clinical evidence suggests that they are ineffective and in fact pose a risk.

KA524 Bed poles should no longer be used. Bed sticks/poles pose the risk of injury or death with documented cases of asphyxiation by entrapment, and anecdotal reports of impalement and falls. In environments where behaviour may be challenging, they may also have the potential to be used to harm others.



Precautions:

- Check the position of the bed stick/pole daily - there should be no gap between the mattress and bed/stick. **Any gap can pose a risk of trapping parts of the body and cause injury**
- Contact case manager or prescribing health professional if the person using the bed stick is at risk of falls from the bed
- Do not use a bed stick/pole if you have existing upper limb pain
- Contact case manager if there is change in cognition or perception
- Contact case manager if there is change in medication that may cause weakness or confusion.

Moving from lying to sitting

- The person reaches for the bed stick/pole.
- The person pulls themselves up using both hands from a lying to a sitting position.

Moving from sitting to lying

- Have the person sit beside the bed stick/pole and grab hold of it.
- The person uses the bed stick/pole to lower/lever into a lying position.

Prior to use

- The bed stick/pole is placed in-between the mattress and the bed base.
- There should be no gaps between the mattress and the bed stick/pole.
- Place the bed stick/pole at the side of the bed approximately at elbow level when lying down.

Dignity of Risk

- Calvary Community Care is committed to promoting a client's individual right to self-determination, to make their own choices, including the choice to take risks.
- A reasonable balance will need to be achieved between a client's Dignity of Choice and Calvary Community Care's Duty of Care obligation through discussions.