



## Fall Prevention Tools to Emphasize Patient Rights and Dignity

Fall prevention is an important and timely issue. Each year in the United States, nearly one-third of people age 65 and older experience a fall that results in a threat to their health and independence. Nearly one out of ten falls among the elderly results in a serious injury that requires hospitalization and possibly a year or more recovering in a long-term care facility. However, falls are preventable with an effective, individualized fall preventive program tailored to each individual's needs.

In the healthcare environment, restraints have been a topic of concern for many years and have recently received even more attention. Every patient has the right to be free from physical and chemical restraints when the restraints are being used to avoid caring for the patient's needs. Restraints can cause declines in a person's physical, mental, and psychosocial well-being. A fall preventive program, such as the Bed-Check System, serves as an integral part of fall and restraint reduction. Bed-Check has created an alternative to the use of restraints and emphasized patient rights and dignity.

The Bed-Check System offers caregivers a fall reduction tool for acute, sub-acute, long-term, rehabilitation, assisted living, nursing home and home settings with the goal of achieving enhanced dignity for the recipient coupled with ease of care for the provider. However, since systems such as Bed-Check are a tool and not a one stop solution, they are only as effective as the individuals using them. The purpose of Bed-Check is to monitor those patients assessed as fall risks and alert their caregivers that immediate intervention is required. The caregiver is then responsible to respond to the person, not the alarm, and assist with the reason for the movement that generated the alarm such as: discomfort with the current position, a need for a drink, bathroom needs or simply a need to move. It is not the caregiver's responsibility to respond to the alarm and only direct the individual to sit back down.

Caregivers should remember that systems, such as Bed-Check, are tools to enhance dignity and prevent patient injury. There are many individuals at risk for falls and injury and require a safety plan. These plans need to be highly individualized and based on a thorough assessment of the risk factors that exist within the person and the clinical condition in the environment.

References: [www.jointcommission.org](http://www.jointcommission.org)  
[www.cdc.com](http://www.cdc.com)