

## **GAIT BELTS**

### **PURPOSE:**

To promote ambulation activity for patients on falls precautions, by providing increased security for the patient and staff.

### **POLICY:**

1. Gait belts shall be used to aid in transferring and ambulating of all patients on fall precautions.
2. The gait belt:
  - A. Provides a firm grasping surface for the healthcare provider.
  - B. Protects the patient from accidental trauma to the skin.
  - C. Gives the patient a sense of security as it is tightened.
  - D. Helps to reduce health care provider lower back strain.
  - E. Allows the healthcare provider to gradually lower a patient to the floor (if necessary) without injuring self or patient.
3. Considerations when using a gait belt:
  - A. Recent colostomy/ileostomy surgery
  - B. A severe cardiac condition
  - C. Severe respiratory problems
  - D. Recent abdominal, chest or back surgery
  - E. Abdominal aneurysm
  - F. Phobia regarding belts
4. Employees using the gait belt shall have documented competency.

<b>RESPONSIBLE PARTY</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
RN, RN Applicant, LPN, CNA	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identifies patients at risk for falls.</li> <li>2. Places patient on falls precautions.</li> <li>3. Uses a gait belt for all transfer/ambulation activities.</li> <li>4. <b><u>Using a Gait Belt:</u></b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Once the patient is in a sitting position, apply the gait belt snugly to the patient’s waist.</li> <li>b. After the patient is standing, use the gait belt to assist in stabilizing and turning the patient using the entire hand.</li> <li>c. If the patient begins to fall, draw the patient close to your body using the gait belt, and slowly lower the patient to the floor.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

**References:**

OSHA. Health Care Facilities Training. [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov).

Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission. Back in Form Lift and Transfer Program. [www.whscc.nb.ca](http://www.whscc.nb.ca).

Hospital Policy 5.42: Falls Policy

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