

PROCEDURES

HOW TO USE A GAIT BELT

What is it? A gait belt is a safety device used for moving a person from one place to another. The belt is also used to help hold up a weak person while they walk. Putting this belt around a person's waist allows helpers to grip it and keep the person from falling. It also decreases the chance of a helper hurting his back while helping a person move or walk.

Why is a gait belt needed? A person may need to wear a gait belt because he is too weak to stand or walk alone. A person may need it when going from one place to another, like from the bed to a chair.

What kinds of belts are used? There are several kinds of gait belts. Usually a gait belt is about 1-1/2 to 4 inches (3.8 to 10 centimeters) wide and 54 to 60 inches (137 to 152 centimeters) long. The belt is made of canvas, nylon, or leather with a buckle at one end. Ask a caregiver to help you choose the best gait belt for you. You can buy a gait belt at medical supply stores.

GAIT BELT

A gait belt is used for all transfers. With the exception of, fx hips, surgery in area of belt, g-tubes, a colostomy (on some residents), Hiatal Hernia, severe heart or respiratory disease (on some residents).

Using the Gait Belt

Place belt around patient's waist only, not around patient's chest. Secure buckle by inserting male end of belt into female end. (Note: to release buckle, simultaneously press tabs at top and bottom of buckle.) Webbing is properly installed in metal buckle upon shipment.

Make certain that belt fits snugly, but leave enough room so that you can get your hands around the webbing. Grab the belt at the patient's back and patient's side. It is recommended that a right-handed caregiver place her right hand on patient's back left hand at patient's left side. Left-handed caregivers should do the opposite, to achieve your most secure grip slide hands upwards under the belt with palms facing away from patient.

Important

Before ambulating, transferring or lifting patient be certain that you are physically able of supporting the patient. This is especially important if the patient is heavy. Two caregivers may be required.

Laundering

This belt maybe laundered and dried at temperatures up to 180 degrees F(82C).

How do I use a gait belt?

The following steps will guide a helper on how to use a gait belt:

Step 1: Tell the person that the belt is used to prevent falls, and that it will be removed after the transfer.

Step 2: Put the belt around the waist over clothing with the buckle in front. If the person wearing the belt is female, be sure the belt is not over her breasts.

Thread the belt through the teeth of the buckle. Put the belt through the other two openings to lock it.

Step 3: Be sure the belt is snug with just enough room to get your fingers under it.