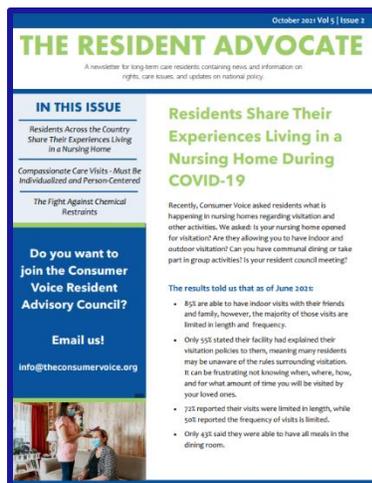


Excerpts from The Resident Advocate

The Resident Advocate is a newsletter for residents of long-term care facilities containing news and information on rights and care issues, plus updates on national policy. Below are two articles on chemical restraints from the October 2019 and October 2020 issues of *The Resident Advocate*. [Read the full newsletters on our website.](#)

October 2021 Newsletter

The Fight Against Chemical Restraints



Too frequently instead of ensuring residents receive the quality care they need, antipsychotic drugs are prescribed to control behavior or for the convenience of staff. When used like this, these drugs are a form of chemical restraint.

Antipsychotic drugs are meant to treat patients with specific mental disorder diagnoses such as Schizophrenia. These drugs are not appropriate treatment for dementia. Residents are entitled to individualized care, not sedation.

Actions such as frustration, anger, pacing, swearing, or hitting are often signals that something is wrong. It's how the person is trying to communicate. These signs of distress could be

caused by fear, pain, hunger, or something else. Masking the symptoms do not resolve the underlying problem.

Federal law gives residents the right to expect individualized care that meets their needs, and to be free from chemical restraints.

Questions you can ask if you are feeling uneasy about your treatment or notice a new medication in your daily schedule should be: Why was the drug ordered? What prompted it? Does the drug come with a black box warning? What possible interactions will it have with other medications?

Every person deserves individualized care and should be able to retain their dignity and autonomy while under the care of others.

- Know what's in your care plan and ask questions about the usage and safety of your medications. You have the right to refuse treatment, including medications.
- Take control of your safety by staying up to date on which drugs you are taking and knowing about their risks and side effects.
- Keep an open line of communication with your caregiver and ask about any medications you are unsure about.

For more information, visit www.theconsumervoice.org/stop-chemical-restraints.

October 2019 Newsletter

Know Your Medications

— THE RESIDENT ADVOCATE —
The Resident Advocate is a newsletter for residents of long term care facilities containing news and information on rights and care issues. You submit or request policy.

Know Your Medications

While medicine is important for healthcare, in some cases it can cause more harm than good. Antipsychotic drugs affect the brain and influence thinking, feeling, and reacting. Used correctly, these drugs treat symptoms of psychosis, which can include hallucinations and delusions, and can enhance quality of life. The improper use of antipsychotic medications can lead to harmful side effects like pain, confusion, falls, and an increased chance of stroke, especially in those with dementia. In some cases, antipsychotic drugs are given when residents show signs of distress in place of good care, this is known as a chemical restraint. Federal nursing home laws prohibit the use of chemical restraints and unnecessary drugs. The law also requires that nursing homes provide quality care, so individuals reach or maintain their highest level of well-being.

It's a good idea to know about the medications you're taking. Ask your doctor or the nurse in charge why you are taking each drug, what the potential side effects are, and if there are any other options. You can also request a care plan meeting to talk about better or different care strategies. Caregivers should first work to identify and treat underlying problems, such as pain, dehydration, infection, or fear, that can cause agitation, confusion, or other changes.

The Long Term Care Ombudsman program advocates for and with residents. Contact the program if you have concerns about your care and need help. Find your Ombudsman at <https://theconsumervoicetexas.org/help>.

It's Your Right: Participate in Your Plan of Care

Care plans are the blueprint for the care and services you are to receive. Your care plan is unique to you and tells how your care needs and goals will be met. You have the right to quality care. In a care planning meeting, you and the staff talk about life in the facility—meals, activities, therapies, personal schedule, medical and nursing care, and emotional needs. You can bring up problems, ask questions, or offer information to help staff provide care. You have the right to participate in the development of your care plan. This plan can include strategies for both medical and non-medical needs and goals.

Before your meeting, it is good to be prepared. Think about the things you want to be included in your care plan. Speak up at the meeting and make sure to ask questions if there is something you don't understand. Before your plan is completed, read it over, make sure everything you want is stated in the plan. When your plan has been created, ask for a copy. If your plan is not being followed, or if the plan is not working for you, don't be afraid to speak up. Ask staff to go over your care plan and make any changes, if needed.

More information about your rights and Residents' Rights Month can be found at <https://theconsumervoicetexas.org/2019/10/01/residents-rights-month/>

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