# A screen shot of a computer  Description automatically generated gait belt safety talk

A gait belt (transfer belt) is an assistance device which helps caregivers safely transfer patients. The gait belt is secured around a person's waist to allow a caregiver to grasp it and aid in lifting or moving. Typical uses for gait belts include assisting patients transfer to and from beds as well as assisting them with sitting, standing and walking.

Gait belts are ideal for patients who are partially-ambulatory and have some weight-bearing capabilities. They can help promote patient independence while providing the caregiver with a more secure means to assisting the patient.

*How to use a gait belt:*

* Place the belt around the patient’s waist (over their clothing) with the buckle in front.
* Thread the belt through the buckle and ensure it is secure. There should only be enough room for you to slide your fingers under the belt.
* While holding onto the belt with both hands, bend your knees and keep your back straight.
* Lift the patient using your arms and leg muscles (NOT your back!).
* Do not twist your body while lifting the patient to avoid back strain.
* While gait belts are useful, there are a few instances in which they should be avoided altogether.

*Do not use a gait belt:*

* To lift a patient.
* On patients who are a “fall risk.”
* On patients with wide girths, as the belt cannot be fastened and appropriately secured.
* For patients with certain medical conditions including colostomy, recent abdominal/chest/back surgeries, and various cardiac and respiratory issues.