

Assistive Devices for Bathing & Toileting- Family/Patient Information



Which assistive devices can help with bathing?

Studies show that assistive devices often help people to be more independent. Everyone has their own bathing/shower habits and different needs.

Usually a combination of the following equipments is helpful.

- **Grab bars:**

Grab bars can be installed in the shower and/or next to the bathtub. Holding on a grab bar will provide support when you:

- Stand up and sit down.
- Go in and out of the shower or bathtub.

The number and the model of grab bars depends on your needs. Some people only need one, others need more.

This diagram shows some of the grab bars that are available. It is very important to install the grab bars firmly and at the right height or place to ensure your safety. You should talk to your health care professional, for example an occupational therapist, who can help with suggestions on the best way to install the bars.



Grab bars can be installed on the wall or clamped directly on the bathtub. Some bars may not be safe for you if you have a weak arm or leg caused by the stroke. Again, make sure to ask a health professional for help or advice before you purchase or install bars.

- **Bath chair/bench:**



You can sit on a bath chair or bench during your shower or bath. You can save energy since you do not have to stand all the time. Also, sitting in the bath or shower is a good idea if you are having balance problems since your stroke.

- **Transfer bath bench:**

A transfer bath bench can make going in and out of the bathtub easier. You sit on it, and then lift your legs over the edge of the bathtub. Most people find this way easier than lifting their leg over the edge of the bathtub while standing up. Again, a therapist or nurse can show you the safest way to do this. It is important to practice with someone who can explain safety before you try this on your own or with your family.



- **Anti-slip rubber mats:**



Anti-slip rubber mats placed inside and outside of the shower/bathtub help prevent falls by providing a surface that is not slippery when it is wet.

Other miscellaneous items:

Opening and closing taps may be easier for you with tap turners.

They add additional leverage when opening and closing taps.



Long handle brushes and sponges allow you to wash your back or clean your toes without bending down or stretching too much.

If you cannot use both hands it is often difficult to hold the soap, lather a washcloth and wring it out.

A possible solution: You can put a bar of soap inside a bath mitt so you do not have to hold it.



We did not show you all the assistive devices for bathing here. There are other types of devices which can be helpful. You can ask your health care professional or find information on the Internet with key words such as "assistive devices" or "assistive technology".

Which assistive devices can help with toileting?

Toileting is a task involving many steps:

- Entering the bathroom
- Getting on/off the toilet
- Managing clothing
- Cleaning yourself

Each of these steps can represent a challenge for an individual who has had a stroke. The use of assistive devices can help you to perform these tasks more easily and more safely.



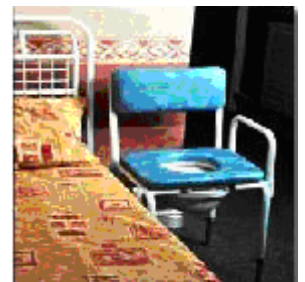
Bathroom accessibility

If you need to adapt your bathroom because it is not accessible for you, here are some guidelines to follow:



- Make sure the doorframe is large enough for you to enter the bathroom easily, especially if you have a wheelchair or walker,
- Make sure the space available within the bathroom allows you to circulate easily with a walker or a wheelchair (if you have one),
- Make sure the floor is free from unstable carpets that may cause you to slip and other objects to reduce the risks of falling.

If you can not access the bathroom, there are other solutions available for you. You can use a urinal and/or a commode in another room.



Getting on/off the toilet: Many assistive devices can help if you have difficulty getting on/off the toilet.

- **Fixed grab bars:**



These are recommended for someone who can walk into the bathroom and who can sit on the toilet while using only one hand for support. The grab bar has to be installed on a wall close to the toilet.



The types of grab bars needed may differ from a person to another. The height of the grab bars is also variable depending on your needs. Consult an Occupational Therapist to ensure that the type and the place where you will install the grab bar fit your needs.

Fixed toilet frame:



If there is no wall close to the toilet or if the person needs two hands to hold on to something to get on/off the toilet, a toilet frame can be fixed on the floor around the toilet.

Raised toilet seat:

A raised toilet seat increases the height of the toilet pan. It makes it easier for you to sit down on the toilet and stand up. Raised toilet seats of different heights are available commercially. The adequate height should allow the user to place his/her foot flat on the floor while seated on the toilet. If you live with other people who use the same bathroom, they will need to know how to remove the raised toilet seat.



NOTE: It is important to make sure that it is securely attached to the toilet each time you use it. Incorrect fitting of the raised toilet seat increase risks of fall since it can move. It can also damage the seat if it is replaced incorrectly.

Toilet frame with seat /Toilet seat with handles:



If you need a toilet frame to hold onto something with two hands and a raised toilet seat, you can use one of these assistive devices. They can rule out the problem as they have both adaptations.

!All the assistive devices above should have non-slippery surfaces to ensure safety when you used them!

Managing clothing

Refer to "*Which assistive devices can help with dressing?*" to learn safe techniques to undress/dress the lower body.

! Do not rush the task and keep the bathroom floor dry at all time to reduce risks of fall!

Cleaning yourself

- **Sheets of toilet paper or wet wipe sheets:**

If you have difficulty separating the sheets of a roll of toilet paper, you can try to use sheets of toilet paper or wet wipe sheets as they are easier to manipulate with one hand.

- **Portable bidet/bidet-toilets:**

If using toilet paper is very hard for you because you have difficulty moving one arm, you can also try to use a bidet. However, these are not recommended if you have difficulty standing safely. Bidets are expensive devices.



Other assistive devices

- **Urinals**



If it is difficult for you to go in the bathroom or to transfer to the toilet, you can use a urinal. Urinals can be used in lying or sitting. They may be convenient for day and/or night time use. Two types of urinals are available: male urinals (bottles) and female urinals.

! Urinals should not be use for bowel movement!

- **Bed pans:**



A bed pan can help you if you have difficulties getting up from your bed safely to go to the bathroom. Bed pans are designed to be used for bowel movements as well as for urinating.

! Bed pans and urinals should be washed regularly to prevent odors and for cleanliness!

- **Bedside commode:**

A bedside commode can be used in the bedroom when it is difficult for you to access the bathroom or if you have difficulty reaching the bathroom on time. It is possible to adjust the height of a commode. It is important that your feet touch the ground (preferably flat) when you sit on the commode.



! Make sure that the breaks are on when transferring on to your commode. This will ensure safety and reduce the risks of injuries!



The majority of falls happens in the bathroom for people who have had a stroke. Hence, it is important to identify the potential dangers and to correct them. Also, try to make sure that you do not hurry to the bathroom and that the floor is dry to reduce the risks of falls.

This site does not show all the available assistive devices for bathing. There are other types of devices that can be helpful; you can ask your health care professional or search for information on the Internet.

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