

Department of
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

Shower Tips for Caregivers



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1. Before Showering

Creating a Safe Environment for Showering

- ❑ Install **grab bars** in your toilet.
 - Do not place any item on the grab bars.
 - Avoid using towel rails as grab bars as it is dangerous.
- ❑ Keep your bathroom **well-lit**.
- ❑ If the patient uses a mobile commode, you may consider installing a **ramp** at the bathroom door edge.
- ❑ Place a shower chair or commode in the shower and encourage the patient to **sit whilst showering**.
 - Place the shower chair or commode against the wall for added stability.



Shower Chair



Commode

Grab bars

1. Before Showering

Creating a Safe Environment for Showering

- ❑ Ensure that the floor is **dry** and **clutter-free** before the patient enters or exits the toilet.
 - Remove all loose mats on the toilet floor.
 - Install **non-slip mats** and ensure they are **firmly attached** to the floor.
- ❑ If the patient uses a bucket to shower, you can install a **handheld shower head** to conserve his/her energy.
- ❑ Gather all the items needed **before** entering the shower (e.g. clean clothes, a towel, any assistive equipment like a long-handled brush).
- ❑ Place commonly used items on shelves or baskets and place them **within arm's reach**.



Basket with commonly used items

2. Getting The Patient In and Out of the Bathroom

Creating a Safe Environment for Showering

Two caregivers are required for this transfer



1. Position the mobile commode facing the bathroom door edge. Stand with person 1 in front of the commode and person 2 behind the commode.



2. Ensure that the patient's safety belt is fastened/secured.

3. Push the commode until the front wheels touch the bathroom door edge.

4. Person 1:

- Hold on to the front legs of the commode.
- Keep your knees bent and your back straight.
- Pull the front wheels of the commode up and over the door edge.



5. Person 2:

- Use your body weight to push down on the commode handles, tilt the commode backwards and stabilise it.
- After the front of the commode has crossed the door edge, lift the commode up and over the door edge.

Repeat the steps above to bring the mobile commode out of the bathroom.

2. Getting The Patient In and Out of the Bathroom

Positioning of the Wheelchair and Commode



1. Remove the **footrests** of both the wheelchair and the mobile commode.
2. Remove the **armrest** of the mobile commode that the patient will be transferring to.
3. Position the mobile commode **directly in front** of the bathroom door edge and **lock** all the wheels.



4. Position the wheelchair on the other side of the bathroom door edge at a **30-degree angle** and **lock** all the wheels.
5. Ensure that both the wheelchair and the mobile commode are as **close to the bathroom door edge** as possible.

If the wheelchair has removable armrests, remove the armrest on **the side that is closest** to the mobile commode.

2. Getting The Patient In and Out of the Bathroom

Transferring the Patient

For patients with fractures or who have had a stroke, it is recommended to transfer them on their unaffected side.



1. Stand in front of the patient and shift him/her out of the wheelchair until **both** their feet cross the bathroom door edge and **touch** the floor.



2. Place the patient's hand onto the **armrest** of the mobile commode if he/she is able to assist in the transfer.

2. Getting The Patient In and Out of the Bathroom

(Continued)



3. Place **both your hands** under the patient's arms. **Lock** the affected knee in between your legs if the patient's leg is unsteady.



4. Count down from **three to one** to prepare the patient for the transfer, then **shift** the patient onto the mobile commode.
5. Shift the patient **backwards** into the mobile commode to ensure that he/she is **seated securely**.
6. Put back the armrest of the mobile commode.

3. During Showering

Advice for Caregivers

1. When you are showering the patient, remember to **keep as relaxed** as possible because:
 - Showering is an intimate task and it can be embarrassing for you and the patient, so do your best to make him/her feel comfortable!
2. If the patient can shower without much assistance, give him/her **as much privacy as possible** but still **stay close by** in case they ask for help.
3. You can provide a small towel or a long-handled sponge if the patient is unable to wash his/her back or feet on their own.
4. If the patient needs to stand to wash their private parts, ensure they **hold onto the grab bars** to support themselves.



Long-handled sponge

3. During Showering

Quick Tips

- ❑ Check if the patient needs to use the toilet **before** showering.
- ❑ Ensure that the water is at a **comfortable temperature** before washing the patient (not too hot or cold).
- ❑ Let the patient know what is going to happen during each step of the showering process.
- ❑ Start with washing the **less sensitive parts** of the patient's body (e.g. arms/legs) before washing the **more sensitive parts** (e.g. chest/private parts/face).
- ❑ Pay more attention to washing body parts with **folds** (e.g. stomach, private parts).
- ❑ Observe for any signs of discomfort or pain.



- ❑ Monitor the patient's skin for signs of **redness**, rashes or **sores** and seek medical attention if you notice anything abnormal.

4. After Showering

(Continued)

- ❑ Keep the patient as **comfortable** and **warm** as possible throughout the showering process.
- ❑ Give the patient a towel to dry off and help them dry areas that may be **difficult to reach** (e.g. in between their toes or back).
- ❑ Rinse away any remaining soap bubbles and dry the floor **thoroughly** before helping the patient out of the bathroom.



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