Cleaning Bathroom AT Devices

PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to clarify bathroom mobility options and safety aids for individuals who are experiencing temporary or permanent mobility issues. These issues occur frequently after major illness or surgery, and a wide array of devices are available to improve mobility for daily personal hygiene routine. The devices also minimize the tasks of the caregiver.

GUIDE TO COMMON BATHROOM AIDS

Toilet aids. Many patients experience difficulty standing after sitting on a low chair or toilet seat. There are several alternatives to aid this circumstance.

1. If the patient is able to rise from a sitting position but needs assistance with stability after on his/her feet, a walker may provide the needed support. It should be placed in front of the patient to provide stability after standing.
2. If the patient is unable to stand from a low sitting position, a raised toilet seat may be needed. These fit over most standard home commodes and elevate the commode to the height of a handicapped commode. This has the advantage of being removable if other individuals share the bathroom.
3. Additional leverage to aid standing may be provided by bathroom safety bars. They are placed behind the commode to provide handrails beside the commode to provide grips for the patient to use for leverage to stand.
4. There are safety bars or handrails that fit onto the commode to provide leverage.
5. If the disability is permanent, the patient may elect to install a handicapped commode in the home.
6. Portable (or bedside) commodes are lightweight and have removable buckets for patients unable to walk to the bathroom.

Bathtub and shower aids. The need depends on whether the patient is able to walk, stand and climb into and out of bathtubs and/or showers. The different aids address these issues.

1. Grab bars. If the patient is mobile and agile, but needs aids to leverage standing in the bath or shower, or to pull himself or herself up in the tub, grab bars may be a good solution. These are permanently mounted on the wall (into the support structure or studs) to give maximum support and stability. (Suction-mounted grab bars are not recommended because they may pose a safety hazard.)
2. Shower seat or bench. These seats are placed in the shower to allow the individual to sit. They have adjustable height legs and come with or without backs. They may be entirely molded plastic or a combination of molded plastic and aluminum. They have holes in the seat for ease of water drainage, and the seat usually has corner locations to hang a hand-held shower spray or bath brush. The seat must be an appropriate size and adjustable to the proper height. The patient or caregiver should measure the dimensions of unobstructed floor space in the shower. There must be adequate space for the seat and for the individual to stand in front of the seat. Hand-held shower nozzles are widely available at plumbing, home improvement and hardware stores.
3. **Tub bench or transfer bench.** Some patients experience difficulty climbing into and out of the tub. This bench is similar to the shower bench, but designed to allow the patient to sit on the outside of the tub then slide (or transfer) to the other end of the bench inside the tub. The legs are adjustable to stabilize the device with two legs on the floor and two inside the tub.

**Combination portable commode/ raised toilet seat and shower bench.** Some durable medical equipment companies make a single piece of equipment that serves all three needs and saves space. The bench has a lift seat with a removable bucket to serve as a portable commode. With the bucket removed, it can be used over the regular toilet as a raised toilet seat. With the bucket removed and the seat down, it can use used as a shower chair.

**Specialty items.** Severely handicapped and bariatric patients may require special versions of these aids, or entirely different aids to meet these needs.

**CLEANING AND MAINTAINING BATHROOM AIDS**

Most bathroom assistive devices are made of molded plastic or aluminum or a combination of the two. Some devices have rubber tips.

The moisture in the bathroom poses a problem in the maintenance of safety aids: It fosters the growth of mold and bacteria. This is especially true of shower seats and transfer benches that are used in an environment of warm, moist water and air where they are unlikely to dry completely between uses.

The molded plastic surfaces of the equipment must be cleaned to remove surface residue and to prevent the growth of mold. The manufacturer’s instructions should be followed for cleaning. If those are not available, a solution of detergent and water may be used with a bristle brush that will reach crevices. Caustic cleaners should not be used on objects that may come into contact with skin. It is important to clean the underside of seats and the adjustable legs that appear on most models. The areas where parts meet collect moisture are especially prone to mold and mildew.

The holes in shower seats that allow water to drain through also capture moisture and foster the growth of mold. These holes may be cleaned with a small brush that will fit into the holes or a cotton swab. It’s much easier to prevent the growth of bacteria and mold than remove it later.

The device should be rinsed thoroughly after each use of detergent or cleaner. A clean, dry towel or disposable towel may be used to dry the device completely after cleaning, or it may be allowed to air dry. The clean device should be stored in a dry area to prevent the growth of mold.

**HUBSCRUB USE for Bathroom AT Devices**
Refer to the manufacturers specifications regarding temperature tolerance and chemical agents used for sanitizing in the HUBSCRUB. Generally, the HUBSCRUB will be in use during a worksession exclusively for manual wheelchairs. If the HUBSCRUB is available, check with the Captain to determine the proper cycle and operation for the Bathroom AT Device to be cleaned.

REFERENCE

INTERNET LINK WARNING
Please note that by selecting an Internet link you will be directed to an external site, and the Pass It on Center does not control the content of the site.

DISCLAIMER
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