

Occupational Therapy

Bathing and showering advice and information

The aim of this leaflet is to give you and your carer advice and information about ways in which you may be able to solve bathing (getting in and out of a bath) problems.

Some practical solutions

Washing

Many people keep themselves clean by regularly 'strip washing' and this may be the simplest, safest way to continue. It is often advisable to sit whilst washing yourself.

Bathing

Safety must be your first concern. Bathing can be dangerous for anyone but the risks increase with age and disability. **If in doubt, do not attempt to use the bath.**

Problems with bathing

The main problem areas associated with using the bath safely are:

- Stepping in and out of the bath
- Sitting down and getting up again

Solutions

Bath-boards:

Rather than stepping in and out, it may be easier and safer to use a bath-



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board. These boards fit across the top of the bath firmly. They allow you to sit on the board first, then swivel and lift your legs over the bath side. They are particularly useful with a shower over the bath, as you do not need to get down into the bath at all.

Grab Rails:

Grab rail can be fitted at the side of the bath rails to help give support when you are getting in and out of a bath.

Bath seats:

A bath seat placed securely on the bottom of the bath may help you to get up and down more easily. It is also advisable to use a nonslip mat and/or grab rail for your safety.

Bath seats should not be used with bath oils as this makes the bath slippery and doesn't allow the seat to stick sufficiently.

Problems with Showering

The main problem areas associated with using a shower safely are:

- Transferring in and out of cubicle/over side of bath
- Standing tolerance
- Falls risk

Solutions:

It is sometimes challenging to assess for showering equipment whilst you are in hospital. We would advise you to initially have a strip wash on discharge from hospital. We can complete a community referral for an Occupational Therapist to assess your shower for equipment once you are home. **Only if appropriate**, we can complete a virtual access visit with your family via video call.

There is a range of other bathing equipment available. You may find it useful to contact the Disabled Living Foundation (DLF) The DLF is a national charity that provides free, impartial advice about **all types of disability equipment and mobility products**. Their helpline is 0300 999 0004 or via www.dlf.org.uk.

Patient Information

For a leaflet giving details of local equipment suppliers, please contact our department.

Further Information:

This factsheet is intended to provide you with some useful guidance and suggestions. Everyone's needs are different, and this advice may not meet everyone's needs. If you need further advice please contact your local Social Services Occupational Therapy department who will be able to provide you with a full assessment of your needs and access to other equipment and adaptations.

Coventry OPAL Occupational Therapy Department:

024 7678 5252

Warwickshire Occupational Therapy Department:

01926 410410

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format please contact the team and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

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