

## **Bath Safety - Preventing Slip and Fall Accidents in the Bathroom**

Statistics show bathrooms can be the most dangerous room in your house. 70% of home accidents occur in the bathroom. The combination of water and smooth surfaces makes taking a bath or shower a risky proposition. Slip and falls account for over 20,000 fatalities per year in North America. It is the second leading cause of accidental death and disability after automobile accidents. Over 75% of slip-fall deaths occur to people 65 years of age or older. Given those statistics, what can you do to keep your bathroom safe?

### **Grab Bars**

A grab bar is a safety device that attaches to the wall and acts as a hand grip to steady you. These are useful near toilets or in bathtubs/showers to help the person keep their balance. They are traditionally constructed of plastic, aluminum, or stainless steel, and usually screw into the wall. There are also grab bars that use suction to hold onto the wall, so you don't have to put holes into the wall. These suction ones are not meant to hold the whole body weight, but rather to act as a steadying influence.

### **Transfer Benches**

Getting in and out of the bathtub or shower can be a tricky thing as you step over the wall onto a possibly wet surface. Transfer benches help minimize the risk involved. A transfer bench is basically a wide chair straddling the tub wall, so that there are 2 legs on the outside and 2 legs on the inside of the tub. To get into the tub, you sit down on the outside and scoot over until you are sitting inside the tub. It takes a lot of the risk out of getting in, because you are sitting down the whole time. There are many different variations of transfer benches ranging from those with padded seats to those with commode openings for perineal washing.

Recently transfer benches with a sliding seat have become available. These make getting in and out of the tub or shower even easier. The benches have a seat that glides on rails in and out of the bathtub. So instead of having to scoot over on the transfer bench seat, the user simply sits on the seat and

slides into the tub. This variety of transfer benches is especially useful to those who have had recent hip surgery as they don't have to move. It is completely safe and has locks on both sides to hold the seat in place. There are even varieties with seats that swivel and lock into place every 90 degrees to make getting on and off the seat easier.

## **Shower Chairs**

Using a shower chair in the bathtub or shower lets the user sit down while they're bathing, so they don't have to worry about standing up and possibly slipping. I would recommend the kind with a backrest and armrests, as they provide support in standing up and sitting down. There are types with padded seats for those who need a softer surface. They have chair with cut out seats, so you can wash the undersides, and they have models that fold up when not in use. The chairs are usually constructed of rust resistant material like aluminum, plastic, or stainless steel, and are generally quite lightweight.

## **Toilet Safety Frame**

People sometimes have trouble getting up once they've sat down, so a toilet safety frame fits around or over the toilet and provides armrests so that the user can have something to support themselves with as they stand up or sit down. Commode risers/raised toilet seats are also useful as they attach to the toilet seat so that the user does not have as far to stand up or sit down.

Not only do these types of products provide physical safety, but they also provide a peace of mind for the users, as well as their loved ones.

For more information on bath safety products such as grab bars, transfer benches, shower chairs, and toilet safety frames, give us a call at 800-332-1463.