



## **Bathroom Safety Tips for Seniors**

Shower with grab bars and safety rails. Did you know that your bathroom is one of the most dangerous places in your home? There are nearly 200,000 bathroom accidents each year. Many of these accidents happen to older adults, all too often resulting in fall injuries.

Fall injuries can range from mild to serious, causing broken bones, head contusions and hospital visits. If you have a history of falls, the risk is even greater.

Fortunately, many of these accidents are preventable. Read on to find out how to make your bathroom safer and prevent accidents.

For a visual look at bathroom safety, check out our Senior Bath Safety infographic.

Install grab bars. 70% of older adults use towel bars or other shower features to hold on to while climbing in and out of the shower or tub. But these features aren't built to support weight! Instead, install grab bars in easy reach places in order to help guide your entrance and exit to the shower or tub.

Install a tension pole. The bathroom is full of slippery surfaces — counters and floors among them. Slippery surfaces lead to slips and falls. If you need more support than what your grab bars provide, install a tension pole from floor to ceiling (best done by a professional) in a convenient location to give you something to hold on to.

Use non-skid mats. To further combat slippery surfaces, use non-skid mats inside the shower or tub, as well as in front of it. These mats will give you some traction, and keep splashed water from causing a fall.

Put your toiletries in reach. No stretching for the shampoo bottle allowed! Make sure your towel, soap, and shampoo are within easy reach to prevent getting yourself into an unsteady position that can cause a fall.

Light up the night. Do you shuffle your way to the dark bathroom at night? A poorly-lit pathway can easily cause a fall. Use nightlights to create a well-lit path to the bathroom, reducing the risk of falls.

Install a transfer bench. If you use a tub to bathe or shower, you have to step over the tub's high sides whenever you get in. Eliminate the problem with a transfer bench, which allows you to get in safely by sitting down outside the tub, then sliding over safely.

Use a raised toilet seat and grab bar. Older adults may have difficulty lowering themselves down to sit on a low toilet seat and rising to a standing position safely. A lack of strength or balance can cause a fall. Purchase a raised toilet seat and install a convenient grab bar to make toileting safer.

Individuals who experience episodes of dizziness or orthostatic hypotension may want to have someone nearby when bathing. Because of the increased danger of dizziness when showering or bathing, take extra precautions and have someone nearby to assist if needed. By Diane Walker, RN, MS, CSA Injury Prevention & Home Safety

Essential Health Supplies provides a variety of different Bath Safety products, such as Bath Chairs, Transfer Benches, Commodes, grab bars and much more!