

Bathroom Safety

Looking after your own personal hygiene is an important part of maintaining your self-esteem and independence but the loss of fine motor control and the balance problems that come with Parkinson's disease (PD) can make this difficult. Simple tasks such as brushing your teeth, bathing and using the toilet can become a challenge.

People with PD are at a greater risk of falling and your bathroom can be a hazardous place! With just a few adjustments and alterations your bathroom can be made safer, allowing you to avoid frustrations in caring for yourself. Here are a few suggestions:

- The combination of soap, water, and floor surfaces creates a dangerous situation. **Consider installing wall-to-wall carpeting in the bathroom.**
- **Install grab bars for the toilet, bath, and shower.** Never use towel racks for support.
- **Use non-slip mats** in the shower and tub.
- **Put a chair in the shower or get a bath board for the bath.** Use a hand-held shower head.
- **Never try to get out of a wet, empty bathtub** – they are slippery and dangerous. Instead, get out when the tub is full, so the water can help keep you buoyant.
- **Sit down to dry yourself** or dry off in a terry robe.
- Many people with PD have difficulty with visual contrast. Install carpet that is a different colour from the floor and the fittings. **Use colour-contrasting towels, soap, toothbrushes etc.** so that they are easily visible.
- **Install a night light in the bathroom** and in the hallway leading to it.
- If necessary, rest after bathing and dressing.
- Contact PSCNO for information about an in-home safety and mobility assessment through your local Community Care Access Centre. An **Occupational Therapist** can provide you with information about ways to make your bathroom safer.
- Call our office or check out website for the *PD In-Home Safety Check* help sheet.

Don't put off evaluating the safety of your bathroom. Early assessment and adaption can:

- Improve your safety in the bathroom
- Extend your ability to manage your own personal care
- Allow you to stay in your home longer