

# Bathroom Safety

Each year, millions of adults suffer falls that can cause hip fractures and head traumas, and can increase the risk of early death. Most falls occur in the bathroom where slippery surfaces and poor lighting can make getting on and off the toilet or in and out of the tub more dangerous.

According to the *Centers for Disease Control (CDC)*, falls are the leading cause of both fatal and nonfatal

injuries among older adults. Luckily, you may be able to prevent these falls by taking precautions now.

**Plan now to prevent falls in the bathroom.**

Show a family member or friend the graphic below and ask for help making your bathroom safer. Have a professional install assistive devices, use non-slip mats, and avoid overreaching. The grab bar guidelines (*on the next page*) will help guide proper installation.

## Making Your Bathroom Safe

Use a **commode chair** or **elevated toilet seat** to raise the height of your toilet and steady yourself when standing up from the toilet.

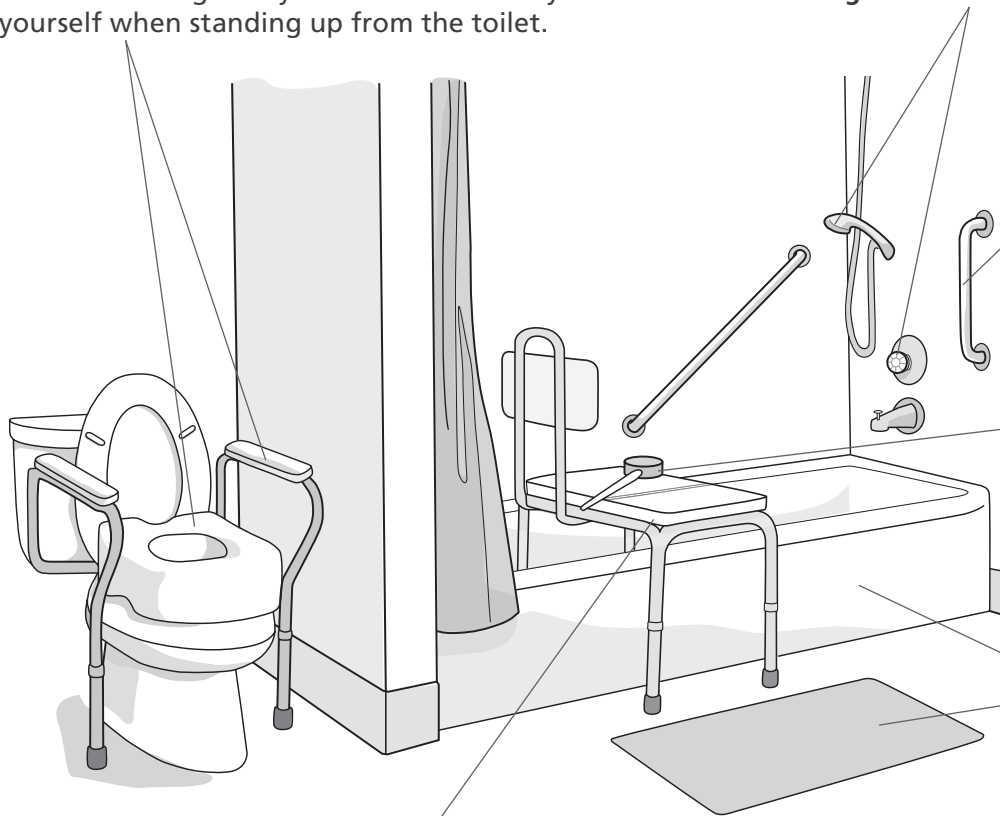
Install a **hand-held shower hose** and **single-lever water mixing faucet** for better temperature control.

Use **grab bars** in your shower or tub for support as you get in and out. (See *Grab Bar Guidelines on the back.*)

Keep a **long-handled sponge** handy to wash hard-to-reach areas.

Prevent slips and falls by using **non-slip bathmats** on your bathroom floor and in your tub and shower.

Sit on a **bath bench** or **shower chair** while you bathe. A shower chair can also be used for dressing and grooming at the sink.



## Key Bathroom Safety Measures

- Install a toilet riser
- Use a commode chair
- Install grab bars in the tub enclosure and on the shower head wall (see below for guidelines)
- Get a long-handled sponge
- Use a hand-held shower hose
- Install a single-lever, water-mixing faucet
- Keep a non-slip bath mat or decals in tub or shower floor
- Ensure non-slip flooring and carpeting
- Remove throw rugs, or only use those with a non-slip, rubberized backing
- Keep hot water heater at 120 degrees maximum
- Make sure bath has bright lighting
- Use a night light
- Put bath items on easy-to-reach shelves
- Avoid using bath oils in the tub or shower

## Grab Bar Guidelines

Consider having a professional install your wall-mounted grab bars. If not installed properly, you may not be able to trust your grab bars as safe.

A little bit of additional cost when the bars are installed will help save a lot of heartache and potential medical costs later.

Your grab bar(s) should be 1¼ to 1½ inches in diameter. Choosing a bar with a textured surface will make it easier to grip. Use the diagram at right as a guide for the installation.

If you want to add a second grab bar for support on the shower front wall, it should be at least 12 inches long and installed vertically.

