

BATHROOM

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

With just a few adjustments and alterations, however, 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 porcelain creates a dangerously slippery surface. Consider installing wall-to-wall carpeting in the bathroom.
- 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 on the racks and counters.
- 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.
- If necessary, rest after bathing and dressing.
- Contact Parkinson Society Southwestern Ontario 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.

Parkinson Society Southwestern Ontario gratefully acknowledges Parkinson Society British Columbia for sharing their resources and information.

Source: Pacific Parkinson's Research Centre, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC