PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

About Durable Medical Equipment: Toilet Accessories

This resource explains different types of durable medical equipment for your toilet. It also explains how to use durable medical equipment for your toilet and where to buy it.

Raised toilet seats

A raised toilet seat goes on top of your current toilet to raise the height of the toilet bowl. It can help make sitting down and getting up from the toilet easier and safer. Raised toilet seats fit both round and oval-shaped toilet bowls.

Raised toilet seats come in 3 different heights:

- 2 inches
- 4 inches
- 6 inches

There are 3 common types of raised toilet seats:

- Raised toilet seats (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. Raised toilet seat

- Raised toilet seats with a lock (see Figure 2). A raised toilet seat with a lock attaches securely to the toilet bowl.



Figure 2. Seat with lock

- Raised toilet seats with arms (see Figure 3). A raised toilet seat with arms lets you use your upper body to help you sit or stand.



Figure 3. Seat with arms

How to use a raised toilet seat

To install the raised toilet seat, lift or remove your current toilet seat. Place the raised toilet seat onto the toilet bowl. If the raised toilet seat has a lock, twist the knob to secure it.

Commodes

A commode is a type of portable toilet. It is not hooked up to any plumbing and does not flush. Instead, it catches waste in a bowl under the seat. You'll empty the bowl by hand.

Commodes can be useful for people who have trouble moving around. The seat of the commode is higher than your normal toilet seat. This can make sitting down and standing up easier.

You can put a commode near the bed or in any room. You can also take out the bowl under the seat and put the

commode over your toilet.

There are 3 common types of commodes:

- **Standard commode** (see Figure 4).



Figure 4. Standard commode

- **Drop arm commode** (see Figure 5). A drop arm commode can help people who can't stand and need help moving to and from the commode. The drop arm makes it easier to move to the commode seat from a seated position.



Figure 5. Drop arm commode

- **Rolling commode** (see Figure 6). A rolling commode is easy to move around. It can be rolled over the toilet. It can also be used as a shower chair if the area is flat. Remember to take out the bowl if you use the rolling commode as a shower chair.



Figure 6. Rolling commode

How to use a commode

You do not need to install a commode. You or your caregiver can put your commode together at home. Follow

the instructions that come with the commode.

Some people may need help moving to and from their commode. If you need help, ask your nurse or caregiver.

Toilet frames

A toilet frame goes over your toilet. It helps support your arms when getting on or off the toilet seat (see Figure 7). It can be helpful if you need more support but do not have enough space for a commode. You can use a toilet frame if you prefer to use your current toilet seat instead of a commode.



Figure 7. Toilet with toilet frame

How to use a toilet frame

Attach the toilet frame to your current toilet. You or your caregiver can do this using a screwdriver. To learn more about how to install your toilet frame, follow the directions that come with it.

Where to buy toilet accessories

You can buy a raised toilet, commode, or toilet frame at the following places:

- Medical supply stores or websites.
- Retail drug stores (Walgreens or CVS).

- Supercenters (Walmart or Target).
- Home supply stores (Lowe's or Home Depot).
- Online retailers (Amazon).

Insurance plans do not often cover these accessories. Check with your insurer to find out what your plan covers before buying the accessories you need. If your plan covers them, ask your healthcare provider for a prescription. Follow your insurer's instructions for getting coverage.

If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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