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PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# About Durable Medical Equipment: Toilet Accessories

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

## Raised Toilet Seats

A raised toilet seat is placed on top of your current toilet bowl. It's used to raise the height of the toilet. It can help make sitting down and getting up from the toilet easier and safer.

Raised toilet seats come in 3 different heights: 2 inches, 4 inches, and 6 inches. There are 3 common raised toilet seats:

- Raised toilet seats (see Figure 1).
- Raised toilet seats with a lock (see Figure 2). A raised toilet seat with a lock attaches securely to the toilet bowl.
- Raised toilet seats with arms (see Figure 3). A raised toilet seat with arms allows people to use their upper body to help them sit or stand.



Figure 1. Raised toilet seat

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Figure 2. Seat with lock

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Figure 3. Seat with arms

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Raised toilet seats will fit both round and oval-shaped toilet bowls.

## How To Use a Raised Toilet Seat

To install the raised toilet seat, lift up or completely 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, waste is caught in a bowl under the seat, and the bowl is emptied by hand. Commodes can be useful for people who have trouble moving around. 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. The seat of the commode is higher than your normal toilet seat. This can make sitting down and standing up easier.

There are 3 common commodes:

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



Figure 5. Drop arm commode



Figure 6. Rolling commode

## How To Use a Commode

Commodes don't need to be installed. 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, be sure to ask your nurse or caregiver.

## Toilet Frames

A toilet frame goes over your toilet. It helps give your arms support when getting on or off the toilet seat (see Figure 7). It can be helpful if you need more support, but you don't 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

To use your toilet frame, you'll need to attach it to your current toilet. You or your caregiver can do this using a screwdriver. For more information on 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.
- Medical supply websites.
- Retail drug stores, such as Walgreens or CVS.
- Supercenters, such as Wal-Mart.
- Home supply stores, such as Lowe's or Home Depot.
- Online retailers, such as Amazon.

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

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](http://www.mskcc.org/pe) to search our virtual library.

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