

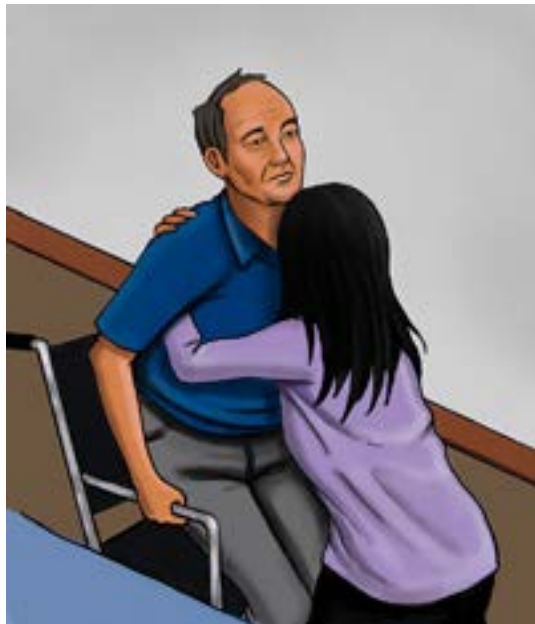
Help with Using the Bathroom

Helping someone use the bathroom is an important responsibility. It can be challenging for both patients and caretakers alike. Whenever possible, help your loved one be as independent as possible for as long as possible. Always ask if they would like your assistance before trying to help.

If your loved one can get out of bed

- Ensure they get to the bathroom safely. Help with buttons, zippers, or removing articles of clothing if necessary.





- Some patients may need assistance while sitting on the toilet. Wrap your arm under their armpit and around their back to help lower them onto the toilet seat.
- After using the bathroom, they may need help cleaning themselves. Make sure you have washed your hands before helping. You may also find it helpful to wear a pair of plastic gloves.
- Start by wiping them with toilet paper, wiping from the front toward the back. Then use a wet wipe to finish cleaning them. Make sure they are clean and dry before putting their clothes back on.
- If the bathroom is located far away, ask your hospice care team for a commode (a small toilet on wheels that can be rolled near the bedside) or a wheelchair to help bring them to the bathroom. You may also want to place a chair halfway to the bathroom, so the patient can rest as they travel from the bedroom to the bathroom.

If your loved one cannot get out of bed or a chair

- Help them sit up if possible. Place lots of pillows behind them or, if they have an adjustable bed or chair, raise the back of it to sit them up. Men can use a handheld urinal provided by your hospice care team to urinate. For everything else, you can provide the patient with a bedpan, which is a portable toilet seat you can place on the bed under the patient to collect their waste.

- Make sure the bedpan is clean and kept nearby. You may have to help the patient place the bedpan underneath them. If possible, have the patient lift their bottom and back off the bed so you can slide it underneath them. You should support their back with one hand while you do this.
- If a patient cannot do this, have them roll to one side, helping them if needed. It can help to have them tuck their knees and hold on to a bed rail, if there is one. While the patient is on their side, place the bedpan on the bed by their bottom. Help the patient roll back, so the pan is positioned under their bottom. Help them with buttons, zippers and clothing that's in the way.
- It is not uncommon for a patient to miss the bedpan or for some waste to spill out when you remove the bedpan. It's helpful to place a waterproof pad underneath the bedpan to protect the bed. Your hospice care team can provide these pads. If urine or stool spills on the sheets, change the sheets right away.

Try to give someone urinating or having a bowel movement as much privacy as possible. You can place a towel or sheet over them while they use the bathroom. It also helps to leave the room or create a calming routine, such as putting on soft music. After helping someone use the bathroom, make sure both of you wash your hands using soap and water or a hand sanitizer.