



American Stroke Association®
A division of the American Heart Association.

Together to End Stroke®

Post-Stroke Bathing Safety Checklist

A Safety Guide for Survivors of Stroke and Caregivers

How to Use This Checklist

This checklist helps you identify fall risks in the bathroom. Review your bathroom and bathing routine and check each question as **YES** or **NO**. Follow the recommendations for the questions you answered with **NO**.

BATHROOM SAFETY FEATURES •

Grab Bars

- YES NO **Do you have grab bars next to the toilet?**
If NO: Work with your therapist to determine the need and placement of the grab bars.
- YES NO **Do you have grab bars inside your tub or shower?**
If NO: Work with your therapist to determine the need and placement of the grab bars.
- YES NO **Do you have grab bars outside your tub or shower?**
If NO: Work with your therapist to determine the need and placement of the grab bars.

Have grab bars installed by a professional. Improperly installed grab bars can pull out of the wall when used, risking serious injury.

Non-Slip Safety

- YES NO **Do you have non-slip mats in your tub or shower?**
If NO: Put rubber mats or strips on the floor where you stand to wash.
- YES NO **Are your bathroom floor mats secure?**
If NO: Use mats with suction cups or secure loose rugs with non-slip backing.

Lighting

- YES NO **Is your bathroom bright enough to see clearly?**
If NO: Add more lights or brighter bulbs. Consider motion-activated lights.
- YES NO **Do you have a night light for the bathroom?**
If NO: Put night lights along the path from your bedroom to the bathroom and in the bathroom itself. Consider leaving the bathroom light on through the night to help see better.

BATHING EQUIPMENT •

Seats and Benches

- YES NO **Do you have a shower chair or bath bench?**
If NO: Get a sturdy seat for washing. Sitting is much safer than standing.
- YES NO **If your shower is in a tub (instead of a walk-in), do you have a transfer bench?**
If NO: Use a bench that goes across the tub edge. You can sit and slide in instead of stepping over.

Shower Setup

- YES NO **Do you have a hand-held shower head?**
If NO: Consider installing one, so you can wash and rinse your entire body while seated.
- YES NO **Can you reach soap and shampoo without stretching?**
If NO: Put supplies where you can reach them easily while sitting.

SAFE BATHING ROUTINE •

Getting Ready

- YES NO **Do you get everything ready before you start bathing?**
If NO: Get everything ready and within reach before you start bathing — towels, soap, shampoo, clean clothes. This prevents extra getting in and out, which can increase the risk of falls.
- YES NO **Is someone nearby when you bathe?**
If NO: Make sure someone is close enough to hear you call for help. Keep a bell or emergency call button within reach while bathing.

Moving Safely

- YES NO **Do you move slowly and plan each step?**
If NO: Take your time. Think about what you'll do before you do it.
- YES NO **If you use a wheelchair, do you lock the brakes first?**
If NO: Always lock wheels and move footrests before getting up.

Shower vs. Bath

- YES NO **Do you shower instead of taking baths when you can?**
If NO: Showers are safer. You're less likely to fall.
- YES NO **If you take baths, do you wait until you're out of the tub to drain the water?**
If NO: Leave water in the tub until after you're out. It helps lift you.

AFTER BATHING •

Getting Dressed

- YES NO **Do you put on non-slip socks or slippers?**
If NO: Wear socks or slippers with non-skid soles after bathing so you don't slip.
- YES NO **Can you dry off and get dressed while sitting?**
If NO: Use a bathrobe to dry off more easily, or sit in a safe place to dry off.

GETTING PROFESSIONAL HELP •

Getting Dressed

- YES NO **Has a therapist looked at your bathroom setup?**
If NO: Ask your health care team about getting your bathroom checked for safety.
- YES NO **Have you learned safe transfer techniques with a therapist?**
If NO: Ask your health care team about learning safe ways to get in and out of the tub or shower.
- YES NO **Have you talked about safe bathing with your stroke team?**
If NO: Bring up your bathing concerns at your next appointment.

WHAT TO DO FIRST •

Do These Right Away

- » Check that grab bars are secure.
- » Secure loose bath mats with suction cups or non-slip backing.
- » Organize supplies so you can reach them while sitting.
- » Pick up clutter or items that may trip you up.

Seek Professional Help (Schedule as soon as possible - see the "Getting Help" section below)

- » Install grab bars where needed.
- » Add better lighting.

Follow Up Items

- » Get a therapist to check your bathroom.
- » Practice safe ways to get in and out of the tub or shower.

GETTING HELP •

Finding Services:

- » Ask your health care team about therapists who can help.
- » Contact your local Area Agency on Aging to learn about programs that can help you set up a safer bathroom.
- » Ask your health care team for a medical social worker consultation. Medical social workers can help identify disability services, community nonprofit programs and other assistance options. They know what's available in your area. They can give you contact information and may help with getting services started.

Getting Things Installed:

- » Professional handyman or contractor services for grab bar installation.
- » Some community groups have volunteers who help.

Emergency Planning:

- » Think about medical alert systems.
- » Set up check-in times with family.
- » Keep emergency phone numbers readily available.

Remember:
Seated showers are safer than baths. With the right equipment and routine, you can bathe safely on your own.

Additional Resources

- » [Bathroom Setup](#)
- » [Home Safety Checklist](#)

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