

Self-Care

Some aspects of self-care include: dressing, bathing, skin care, grooming and oral hygiene. Assistive technology devices relating to self-care can be as simple as Velcro on a shirt, or as complex as bathing equipment for someone with limited, or no mobility. Here are a few of the many assistive technology devices that can help you in your daily routine:

Sock/Stocking Aids: These devices are perfect for those who have limited use of their hands or back problems; wheelchair users; or those recovering from knee or hip surgery. You simply slip the sock/stocking over the frame, insert foot, and pull handles to raise the sock/stocking. No special type of sock or stocking is necessary and a wide variety of models are available.

Button and Zipper Helpers: These devices are perfect for people who have stiffness in their hands, or have the use of only one hand. With the button helper, you simply push the wire hook through the button hole, catch the button with the wire and pull the button back through the hole. For the zipper helper all you need to do is attach the wire hook to the metal tab and pull up. These devices work on MOST buttons and zippers.

Adaptive Clothing: For those with limited mobility, adaptive clothing is available. Instead of buttons or zippers, snaps or Velcro are used to make dressing and undressing easier. For those using wheelchairs, adaptive clothing makes it easy to get dressed in a sitting position.

Personal Hygiene Helpers: For those who lack finger or hand dexterity, special holders are designed to attach items like razors, toothbrushes, and hairbrushes to your hand. This allows you to use your hand in an up and down motion without having to grip an object. Special devices also assist in the use of shaving cream and toothpaste by allowing you to dispense the product easily. With the shaving cream dispenser you simply push down on the clamp without having to grip the can or use your fingers to dispense.

Extended Bath Brushes: For those with a limited range of motion, sponge and scrub brushes are available. The brush is attached to a long handle that allows an individual to reach his/her shoulders, neck, and back. An extended foot brush is also available. An extended scrub brush allows you to clean your feet, and a sponge tip can be used to get between your toes.

Shower/Bath Chair: For those needing assistance in bathing, shower chairs are available to make it easier and more comfortable. These chairs come in a wide variety of styles and can be placed safely in any shower or tub. Depending on individual preference, you may sit up or recline.

What you can do to make things easier:

- Many toothpaste companies now sell their product in a pump dispenser. If you have stiffness or pain in your hands or fingers, this will take the strain off squeezing and rolling the toothpaste tube.
- If buttons or zippers are difficult, look for loose clothing that can be slipped on, or clothes that use snaps instead.
- You can purchase special grips that attach to the handles of your personal hygiene/grooming items. These are inexpensive and allow an individual to hold the object with minimal effort.
- You may also put your personal hygiene products in easy to use containers.
- Glue suction cups to the bottom of your dispensers and attach them to your counter top. This will keep the dispenser in place while you are using it.