

A recent Government of Canada report points out that half of all seniors age 65 and older will suffer a fall-related injury, and upwards of 25% of these injuries will be “severe.” Bathroom safety products can help lessen these risks for seniors. They help increase one’s independence at home.

Safety in the Bathroom

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Are you at risk?

The answer is, unfortunately, yes. From infants and children to the very elderly anyone can be hurt while performing common daily tasks in the bathroom. The most common dangers include slips and falls, burns from scalding water, and electrical shock.

For those over 65 years of age, the statistics point to devastating loss of independence—particularly in the case of falls. In fact, 30% of seniors living in the community fall every year and for those over 80, the risk increases to 40%. Of these falls, 85% occur right in the home. Partial

paralysis, loss of dexterity, changed perception of the environment, and sometimes impaired thought processes after a stroke or taking certain medications, increases the challenge of staying safe in the bathroom.

The good news is that you can take measures to prevent many of these falls, and maximize your safety. You can maintain your dignity, independence, and privacy by making a few specific modifications and/or changes to the bathroom environment that suit your individual needs.

For suggestions on how to make your bathroom a safer place, visit www.myaquasense.com.

Warning signs that you may fall

Toilet:

- Difficulties getting on/off
- Lose balance while adjusting clothing

Tub:

- Lose balance when stepping in/out
- Fearful
- Fatigue when bathing
- Scalding water

Sink:

- Fatigue or dizziness

Difficulty seeing:

Recommendations

- Grab bars – wall mounted
- Safety rails – attached to toilet using existing hardware of seat
- Raised toilet seat – 2” can make a difference! Some models have arm rests attached
- Modify clothes for easy on/off

- Bathmats and non-skid surfaces. Some bathmats have an integrated temperature sensor to provide visual feedback of dangerous water temperatures. Bathmats are considered universal precautions and are recommended for all age groups, with or without mobility, sensory or cognitive impairments
- Grab bars or a bath safety rail
- Bath chair – there are many different styles
- Bath board or transfer bench eliminates the need to step over the edge of the tub and allows safe and independent entry
- Use an anti-scald device and/or turn down hot water thermostat
- Hand-held shower

- Sit on a stool

- Adequate lighting
- Clear plastic shower curtain
- Mirror magnifier
- Contrasting colours

