

## Using a bedside commode: Overview

A bedside commode is a portable toilet. If you are helping someone use a bedside commode, try to be relaxed. Helping with a commode can be embarrassing for both of you. This may be especially true if you are caring for someone of the opposite sex. If you are calm and don't seem embarrassed, the person may feel more comfortable.

Encourage the person you're caring for to use the commode on a regular schedule as much as possible. For example, they may try to use it every two to four hours. Keeping a regular schedule may help people who have problems with incontinence (controlling urine).

## How can you help someone use the commode?

It helps to keep the commode close to your loved one's bed. Place it where it will be easy to get to but not in the way, such as against the wall. Keep the area near the commode free from clutter.

Make sure you have all of the supplies you need, such as toilet paper and a damp cloth or wet wipes. Wash and dry your hands well before you get started, and have gloves available in case you need to help with wiping.

Make sure the person you're caring for is wearing non-slip shoes or slippers. It may also be helpful for them to wear clothes that are easy to take off.

You may need to help with the transfer from a bed or chair onto the commode. Here are some tips:

- Make sure the wheels on the commode are locked.
- As the person gets ready to move to the commode, make sure their feet are not crossed.
- Have the person lean forward before standing. Help them stand up if needed.
- Help the person slowly turn and step back to sit on the commode.
- Be careful that they don't lose balance or tip the commode when sitting down. It's best for men to sit while using the commode.

After the person is done using the commode:

- Help them wipe if needed, and use gloves. Wet wipes may work better than toilet paper for cleaning. For women, be sure to wipe the area from front to back.
- If you helped the person wipe and your gloves became soiled, remove them and throw them away.
- Help the person stand up off the commode. Have them slowly turn, step back to the bed or chair, and then sit.

- Empty the commode bucket into the toilet.
- Rinse and wash the commode bucket or basin using a disinfectant diluted with water. Dry the commode or let it air-dry.
- Wash and dry your hands well.

For 24/7 nurse advice and general health information call Health Link at 811.

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**Author:** [Healthwise Staff](https://www.healthwise.net/patientEd) <https://www.healthwise.net/patientEd>

**Medical Review:** Adam Husney, MD — Family Medicine & Gayle E. Stauffer, RN — Registered Nurse & Kathleen Romito, MD — Family Medicine