



British Geriatrics Society
Improving healthcare
for older people

Dignity: Behind Closed Doors

Promoting good practice in supporting toilet access and use in frail older people

A decision aid for using the toilet in private

Level of mobility	Level of safety to use the toilet alone	Recommendation
Person is mobile	Safe to be left alone in toilet	Use toilet in private
Needs assistance with mobility	Safe to be left alone in toilet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide assistance to reach the toilet • Use toilet in private • Use a wheeled chair to transport person to the toilet
Immobile Needs help with transfers and transit equipment to get to / from toilet	Safe to be left alone in toilet	Use toilet in private Use a wheeled chair to transport to toilet
Immobile Needs hoist for transfers Assessment indicates unsafe to sit unattended	Unsafe to be left alone but can sit on a toilet with surrounding frame and/or attendant supervision Patient chooses to go to the toilet with or without supervision	Use toilet with or without attendant supervision
Immobile Needs hoist for transfers Unsafe to sit unattended	Unsafe to be left alone but can sit with surrounding frame and attendant support Patient chooses not to go to the toilet	Use bedside commode with attendant support and adequate screening with “do not disturb” sign
Bed bound and needing planned bladder or bowel management	Unsafe to sit even with support	Use bed pan or planned rectal evacuations as part of a bladder or bowel management programme. Ensure adequate screening with “do not disturb” sig

Commodes: Use of commodes may be appropriate in a single occupied room at home or a care setting if used in private. Hoists: If these are to be used as a means of transport then all measures to maintain modesty must be taken

See environmental audit tool overleaf



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Environmental audit for toilets in any setting to
be undertaken by lay people

1. Where is the toilet located?

2. Is this toilet designated male, female or unisex?

3. What width is the doorway?

4. Can the door be opened and shut easily?

5. Can the door be locked?

6. Is there a step or steps up to the toilet after entering the toilet room or cubicle?

7. Is assistive equipment available e.g. rails to assist safe movement on/off the toilet?

8. What height is the toilet?

9. Does this toilet have a shower to wash the bottom after using the toilet?

10. Is the toilet paper within easy reach when seated on the toilet?

11. Is the flush system easy to activate?

12. Is the wash basin in the same room?

13. Is the soap dispenser within easy reach?

14. Is the hand dryer or towel(s) within easy reach?

15. Does the cleanliness meet acceptable standards?

16. Are there unpleasant odours?

17. Are there any hazards? (Please list)

Additional Comments

See decision aid overleaf