



Dealing with Toileting Challenges

One of the most common complaints we hear from caregivers of men is, “my loved one will pee everywhere except in the toilet!” No one likes potty talk, but sometimes, we just need to speak about what goes on in the bathroom.

Bathrooms are a confusing place for those with dementia. Take a look around your bathroom. What color is the sink? The trashcan? The toilet? Most times, everything in the bathroom is one color—white. As folks with dementia progress, they tend to start to lose their depth perception and peripheral vision. As this vision decreases, places and items that are the same color become hard to distinguish. Here are some options that might help your loved one distinguish the different places in the bathroom:

- [2000 Flushes](#) -a cleaner that turns the toilet water blue
- [Solid colored toilet seat](#) - we recommend taking the lid off in case your loved one can't remember to open the lid
- [Floor mat](#) that goes around the toilet on the floor to help your loved one find the toilet
- Remove the trash can from the bathroom- this creates fewer options to pick from
- Put a picture on the mirror by the sink of someone washing their hands

Is your loved one not using the bathroom in the bathroom? This can be a sign that they can't make it in time. Here are some handy options:

- [Portable urinal](#)- for gentlemen to use if they can't make it to the bathroom in time. This one even glows in the dark for nighttime use!
- [Bedside commode](#)- for ladies or gentlemen who can't make it in time
- [Nightlights](#)- your loved one might not be able to find their way to the bathroom in the dark.
- Limit liquid intake before bedtime to help them last through the night.
- Briefs/Pads can always be a good option for incontinence, but sometimes folks feel embarrassed to use them or find them uncomfortable. For ladies, [Period Panties](#) can be a great option! While they don't hold as much as a brief, they still keep your loved one drier than normal underwear.

Another thing that leads to accidents is when PWD have trouble getting their pants off in time to use the restroom. [Buck & Buck](#), [Silvert's](#), and [The Able Label](#) are websites that specialize in adaptive clothing. Wearing clothes with velcro or elastic bands can make it easier to remove, therefore helping them use the bathroom in time.

Oftentimes, people may not realize that they need to use the bathroom. Taking your loved one to the restroom (not asking if they need to go) but just taking them to the bathroom and showing them the toilet may help them think, “Oh, why don’t I go since I’m right here!” Sometimes asking the person if they need to go to the bathroom can be embarrassing, and they will often say no. Asking them if they want to take a walk down the hall to stretch their legs and just happen to end up at the bathroom is often a good way to redirect them.

Other times, PWD may refuse to go to the bathroom as they cannot complete the many steps it takes to go to the bathroom. If your loved one needs step-by-step instructions, try breaking them down like this:

1. Unbutton your pants
2. Unzip your pants
3. Pull down your pants
4. Sit down on the toilet
5. Go to the bathroom
6. (For ladies) Wipe front to back (For men) Wipe your behind
7. Put the toilet paper in the toilet
8. Stand up
9. Pull up your underwear
10. Pull up your pants
11. Button your pants
12. Zip your pants

Keep in mind, if you have to do these steps for your loved one, announce each step as you are about to start. Make sure you say the person’s name each time so that they are paying attention. People who don’t tell you what they are doing and just start undressing you can be frightening!