

Bathroom Safety - Grab Bars

What is a grab bar?

- A piece of metal screwed into the wall of your bathroom to give you something safe to hold onto so that you don't fall. The metal has a non-slip surface to provide a secure grip.
- Attached to the studs of the walls, unlike a towel rack or soap dish which will break if you need to put your full weight on it.
- Can be used in the bathtub or shower stall and can also be installed by the toilet.

How do I know if I need a grab bar?

- If you have had a fall in the bathroom or have felt like you might have a fall there.
- If you are having difficulty stepping in or out of the bathtub.
- If you are having difficulty getting on or off the toilet.

Which type of grab bar should I choose?

1. Permanent Wall-mounted

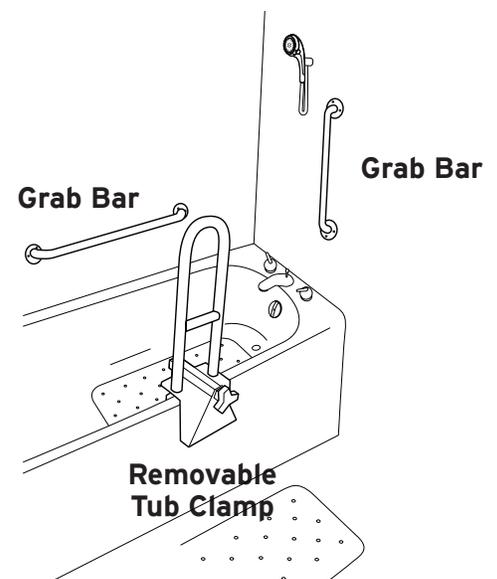
- Vertical, horizontal or angled bars that are screwed into the wall for maximum support.
- Bar lengths vary from about 16" to 32" and should be long enough for you to easily reach.

2. Temporary Clamp-on (or Tub Rail)

- A temporary tub clamp-on or railing can help with balance but is **not designed to support full body weight**.
- Tub clamps need to attach securely to the bathtub to form a secure seal. Do not use on bathtubs with sloped sides. Use with caution.

3. Temporary Suction Cup

- Similar to the temporary clamp-on railing, suction cup grab bars can help with balance but are **not designed to support your full body weight**.
- Temporary grab bars can be self-installed but it is important to follow the manufacturer's installation instructions as these devices may not be suitable on many surfaces including drywall or certain tile surfaces. Suction cup grab bars may be an option on certain fixed glass surfaces (not sliding shower doors) when other grab bars are not possible. Use with caution.



Where can I find grab bars?

- Grab bars are sold at medical supply stores, home renovation stores (for example Home Depot or Rona), and some pharmacies. Medical suppliers may also install them
- If you qualify for the Medical Equipment Provision Program (MEPP – previously known as the Red Cross Equipment Loan Program), temporary tub clamps can be found there.

How can I install a grab bar?

- Permanent wall-mounted grab bars should be professionally installed.
→ They must be anchored into the wall studs in order to be capable of supporting at least 250lbs of force.
- Temporary tub rails or clamps are designed for you to install them. Read installation instructions.

Where should the grab bar be installed?

Think about where you need extra support. Is it as you step into the bathtub, to stand while you are bathing, or to help you to get up from a seated position?

1. Vertical bar:

- Usually mounted on the side or back wall to help you step into the tub.

2. Angled bar:

- Usually mounted on the back wall.
- An angled bar is easier for people of different sizes to reach and can help you in getting up or down from a seated position.

3. Vertical and horizontal combined (L-shaped):

- Usually mounted on the back wall.
- It also assists you in getting up or down from a seated position.

How much does a grab bar cost?

- The cost of permanent grab bars varies from \$30 to \$100, with a **separate installation fee**.
- The cost of temporary tub rails also falls in the \$30 to \$100 range.

CAUTION

- Even if you don't put your full weight through a tub clamp, there is still often a maximum weight limit (for example 250 lbs). Check each product before buying or renting.

For more information, please visit <http://oasis.vch.ca>



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