Dignify Life

FOR FAMILIES OF AN OLDER PARENT

Night-time toilet *safety checklist*

Tick what is already in place. Every point comes from public health advice (NHS, NICE, US National Institute on Aging, CDC, MedlinePlus, Medicare, Alzheimer's Society, Government of Canada). The full guide links each source.

Full guide with sources: dignify-life.com/night-toilet-guide.html

1 Check-up

- [ ] Asked the doctor about frequent night-time trips: some causes can be treated.
- [ ] Asked before changing when water tablets (diuretics) are taken. No medicine stopped without advice.

2 Evening routine

- [ ] Most drinks earlier in the day, fewer in the hours before bed (enough overall).
- [ ] Less caffeine and alcohol in the evening.
- [ ] Swollen ankles: legs raised for about an hour during the day.

3 Light the way

- [ ] Night lights or motion-sensor lights in the bedroom, hallway and bathroom.
- [ ] A lamp or light switch within reach of the bed.
- [ ] A light left on in the bathroom at night.

4 A clear, safe route

- [ ] No loose rugs, cables or clutter between the bed and the toilet.
- [ ] Grab bars beside the toilet (towel rails are not grab bars).
- [ ] A raised toilet seat if sitting down or standing up is hard.
- [ ] Non-slip mats where the floor may get wet.
- [ ] A phone, personal alarm or bed sensor within reach.

5 Getting up

- [ ] Sit on the edge of the bed for a moment before standing.
- [ ] Do not walk while dizzy.

6 Bring the toilet closer

- [ ] Asked an occupational therapist which option suits.
- [ ] Urinal bottle (made for men and for women) beside the bed.
- [ ] Bedside commode against a wall, at the right height, brakes locked.
- [ ] Bed protection or pads as a back-up only.

7 If your parent has dementia

- [ ] Regular, gentle reminders to use the toilet, including before bed.
- [ ] Light timers set so the person is never left suddenly in the dark.
- [ ] A urinal bottle or commode next to the bed at night.

8 Who can help

- [ ] **England:** council social services give a free home assessment by an occupational therapist.
- [ ] **US:** ask the doctor for an OT referral; Medicare Part B may cover a commode chair a doctor orders.
- [ ] **Canada:** provincial home care includes occupational therapy.

General information, not medical advice. A doctor, nurse or occupational therapist can advise on one person's needs. Free to print and share unchanged.

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