PATIENT EDUCATION

Wall Grab Bars

Medicor® HEALTHCARE

Breathe Easier.

What Do Wall Grab Bars Do?

When placed in strategic positions, wall grab bars offer physically challenged individuals a great degree of safety and provide assistance in several different areas of the bathroom.

Wall grab bars are available in stainless steel, chrome-plated steel, or with a nylon polymer coating. They come in a variety of lengths (usually ranging from 12 to 32 inches) and several special configurations, such as right or left angle bars.

Installation Requirements

The quality of the wall grab bar and proper installation are critical. The bar should be constructed of heavy gauge, rust-resistant steel that is welded together so there are no openings for moisture to enter. With the proper tools, an individual with basic “do-it-yourself” skills should have little difficulty performing a safe, secure installation. The tools required for proper installation include:

- Electric drill (preferably slow speed with a chuck capacity to accommodate at least a 9/16” masonry bit)
- 1/4” masonry bit
- 9/16” masonry bit (may have 1/2” turned down shank)
- 1/8” standard drill bit
- Felt tip marker
- Assorted screw drivers
- Hammer
- Punch (must be very sharp)

Although not absolutely essential, an electronic stud locator is also a very handy device for wall grab bar installation.

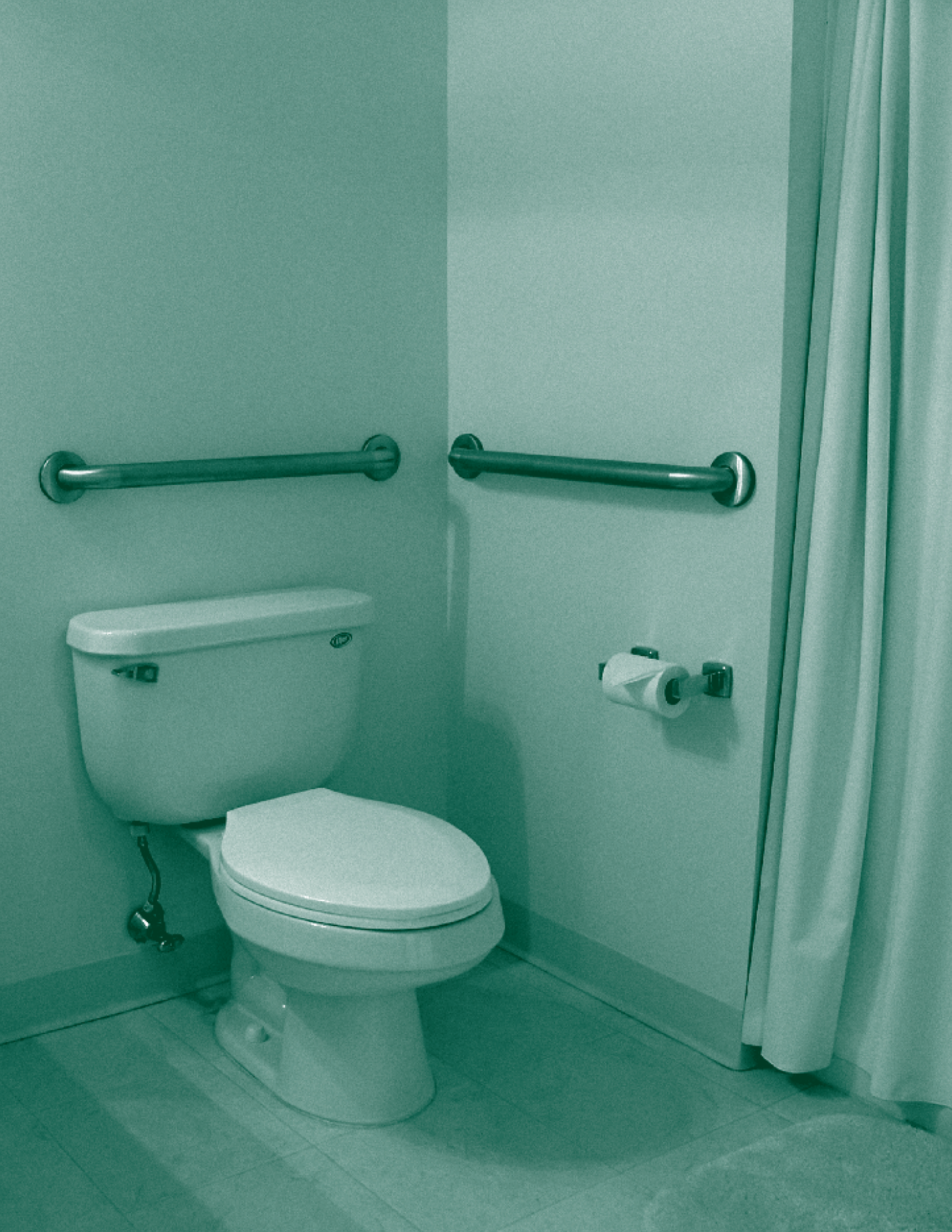
Installation Instructions

Please read through these instructions carefully and completely before beginning the installation:

- Locate the proper placement of the wall grab bars to provide maximum assistance to the user. If possible, have the fully dressed user get into the dry bathtub and simulate use of the grab bars to determine the best location. Once the proper location has been determined, mark the holes in the grab bar flange on the tile wall with a felt tip marker.

- Carefully and lightly chip the glaze on the tile at the hole markings with a sharp punch and a hammer.

- Using an electric drill and a 1/4” masonry bit, carefully drill a hole through the tile and dry wall material behind it.



If you hit a stud (indicated by wood shaving after penetrating the dry wall material): Stop drilling. Change to a 1/8” drill bit and finish drilling a pilot hole into the stud. The hole should now be ready for use with a long wood screw. The best choice is a stainless steel wood screw that is as long as possible (up to 4 inches) with a pan head.

If you do not hit a stud: Re-drill the hole using a 9/16” masonry bit to accommodate a 1/4” toggle bolt (preferably stainless steel). When purchasing the toggle bolts, check the markings on the “butterfly” for the size of the hole required. Some 1/4” toggle bolts can be accommodated by a 1/2” hole. It is preferable to have the smallest hole possible that will accommodate the toggle bolt. Because the hole will not be completely covered by the flange of the grab bar, it should never be larger than 9/16”. Care must be exercised in positioning the holes to avoid the edge of the hole from extending beyond the edge of the flange.

- Install grab bars using the above fasteners.
- An electronic stud locator can be helpful in many ways. When the proper location for the grab bar is determined, the wall can be checked for stud locations. If the hole is too close to the edge of a stud, the grab bar can usually be shifted slightly without impairing its helpfulness to the user. The electronic stud locator can also be helpful in avoiding electrical wiring and/or water pipes hidden behind the wall.

It is always preferable to mount grab bars into studs if it can be done without significantly reducing the effectiveness of the bar for the user.

Precautions

Homes built after the late fifties usually have dry wall construction and present few problems with grab bar installation. If there is reason to believe the walls are constructed of material other than dry wall (for example: wire mesh and plaster), it is better to determine this before starting the installation. Temporarily removing a wall switch plate at receptacle cover will usually allow you to determine the construction of the wall.

If the wall is wire mesh and plaster, a great deal of caution must be exercised. The drill bit can easily hang in the wire mesh and result in breaking one or more pieces of the tile. Unless you have replacement pieces of the tile, and understand the risk, it may be better not to proceed. Also, this type of wall construction is known to deteriorate over time, and may not be strong enough to provide a secure installation. Remember, this is generally only a problem in older homes. If there is any reason to doubt that a safe, secure installation can be performed, it is better to not even begin the procedure. If the integrity of the wall is questionable, the only solution is to mount only to wall studs.

Wall grab bars cannot be installed satisfactorily on the new fiberglass or plastic tub/shower enclosures.

Other bathing aid products that might be helpful include tub-mounted grab bars, bath seats, hand held showers, and non-slip bath mats. Please call us for more information regarding products to enhance your safety and independence while bathing.

Notes

1-800-250-4468
E-mail: info@medicor.us
www.medicorhealthcare.com

THE JOINT COMMISSION
NATIONAL QUALITY APPROVAL

Medicor®
HEALTHCARE