

# Guideline E6:

## Assisting a person to bathe/wash/shower

**Remember - carers are twice as likely as people in most other professions to injure their backs through moving and handling activities. To help minimise these risks always consider the following before you assist a person to bathe/wash/shower:**

<b>Self help</b>	Can the activity be avoided altogether e.g. can the person wash or shower independently rather than get into a bath? An occupational therapist (OT) may be able to advise on equipment to enable independent bathing or washing.
<b>Ergonomics</b>	There is a wide range of specialist bathing equipment available including bath boards/seats, adjustable height baths, flat access showers, grab rails, shower trolleys etc. Long handled aids are available to assist washing e.g. sponges.
<b>Communication</b>	Check how the person wishes to be assisted and consult their handling plan.
<b>Safety</b>	Lifting people in and out of a bath is a high risk activity and should be avoided by using appropriate equipment or assisting the person to have a strip wash or shower. Check floors for hazards e.g. water spillage. Avoid fixed postures especially prolonged stooping.

### Preparation

1. Check individual handling plan for guidance on appropriate methods since there are so many variations in people's individual capability, cultural requirements, bathroom designs etc.
2. Enlist the help of other carers if necessary and collect any equipment required e.g. towels, clothing, kneeling cushions, protective clothing etc.
3. Ensure the person's dignity, privacy, comfort and warmth.

### Providing assistance

1. Follow instructions in the person's handling plan for transferring in/out the bath/shower/bed.
2. Ask or assist the person to undress as stated in the handling plan (refer to guideline E4: Assisting a person to dress).
3. Adjust the height of equipment where possible to a comfortable working level.
4. Position kneeling cushions if required e.g. to kneel at the side of the bath.
5. Follow guidance given in the person's care plan to bathe/shower/wash.
6. Use staff rotation and work scheduling to avoid concentration of activity.

### Warning

- Do not lift or support anyone other than a baby/small child getting in/out of a bath since there is a high risk of injury when the person and/or equipment may be wet and slippery.