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Personal Hygiene: Support, Equipment and Aids for people affected by MSA

This factsheet is one of a series looking at support, equipment and aids that may help people living with MSA. This factsheet addresses the help that can be provided for maintaining good personal hygiene. There is a vast range of equipment available so the information we give here is not exhaustive and neither is it supposed to be recommendations, rather we aim to give you an idea of what sort of aids are available.

We have more specific factsheets on managing bladder and bowel issues that you may find useful to complement the information here - <https://www.msatrust.org.uk/support-for-you/factsheets/>

It is vital that you discuss with your Occupational Therapist any items you are considering buying to help with personal hygiene. Health and Care professionals are best qualified to determine the equipment that is suitable for your individual needs. For continence aids such as pads, urinals and catheters the continence service in your area may be able to provide these or advise you on where to get them.

Remember there is VAT relief on some equipment if you have a disability. You can find out more information about this here - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/vat-relief-on-certain-goods-if-you-have-a-disability>.

Healthcare Professionals

Occupational Therapist

An Occupational Therapist (OT) is one of the members of your healthcare professional team who can offer you individual advice and can help determine equipment that may benefit you. An OT is trained to assess and treat physical conditions, to manage disability and promote independence. They can carry out an assessment of your needs and determine the best possible coping strategies and recommend appropriate equipment for daily living. They can also visit you in your home to determine environmental adaptations that may be of benefit.

You can access an OT through the NHS. This means speaking to one of your medical team or to your GP for a referral. You can also gain access to an OT through your local council's social care services.

Equipment: Personal Hygiene

Physiotherapist

A Physiotherapist treats people with physical problems, often caused by illness. They see physical movement as central to the health and well-being of an individual. They are trained to maximise your movement potential by health promotion, treatment and rehabilitation.

You can get a referral to a Physiotherapist through your GP, although private and independent Physiotherapists also exist.

Continence Advisor

A Continence Advisor is an experienced healthcare professional who is a specialist in bladder, bowel and continence issues. A referral may be made by another health care professional for specialist assessment and advice.

Personal Hygiene

The following tables contain information on equipment that may be of benefit when looking after personal hygiene. There are three tables with information on bedroom equipment, toileting equipment and bathing equipment. At the end of this factsheet you will find a list of commercial suppliers who sell the equipment mentioned.

Bedroom Equipment

Assistive equipment	Description – More information
Disposable bed pads	These will protect the bed linen and are comfortable with a highly absorbent puffy interior.
Disposable hygiene sheets	Disposable bed protectors that fit on top of the mattress and tuck underneath to hold it in place.
Duvet protectors	Soft material duvet covers that are breathable but waterproof.
Waterproof mattress cover	Waterproof, hygienic and easy to care for.
Washable bed pads – e.g. the brand 'Kylie' continence sheets	Washable quilted bed protection sheets.

Toileting Equipment

Assistive equipment	Description – More information
Bed Pans	A good solution for people without easy access to a toilet or who spend a lot of time in bed.
Continence pads	A variety of styles: pouch pants, absorbent briefs, pads and liners; for men and women.
Folding commode	These can be used in the home or for travelling. They fold up so reduce the space required. They can also be used as a support frame over an existing toilet or as a seat in a shower.

Equipment: Personal Hygiene

Long handled easywipe	Easywipes are designed to grip toilet tissues for effective personal hygiene if dexterity is an issue. They maintain independence and allow for easier reach. Also available in a folding form for easy storage when travelling.
Raised Toilet seat	This is a built-up toilet seat that sits on top of the existing one and can raise the height of toilet seat. In differing sizes some can raise the height by up to five inches making it easier to sit and stand.
Shower toilets	These multi-function toilets combine a toilet and bidet plus have the added comfort of warm air drying.
Support Rails	Height adjustable, floor or wall mounted rails that provide something to hold onto to help when sitting and standing should balance be a problem.
Tilt-in-Space shower chair	These chairs have a commode function but also fit into a shower cubicle and tilt up to 30 degrees. They are designed for comfort and ease of use.
Toilet frames	A stable freestanding frame with arms, and sometimes a seat, that sits astride the toilet and provides support with sitting on the toilet and standing.
Travel intermittent catheter kits	Kit contains self-lubricating catheter and attached drainage bag which is leak proof to dispose of once home
Urinals	These are available in many styles with non-return valve fittings, non-spill features and male and female designs.
Urinals – disposable/portable	A handy travel item, such as Travel John or Uribags, for when toilet facilities may be limited.
Wheeled/mobile commode	A portable commode with detachable bowl. Some models can fit over an existing toilet.

Bathing Equipment

Assistive equipment	Description – More information
Hair washing in bed	This can be done with either a solid tray that can be laid under the person's head or by an inflatable version (a smaller version of the inflatable bath below).
Inflatable bed bath	Made from heavy duty vinyl, the (flat) bath can be placed underneath the person in bed and then inflated and filled with water. It also has shower attachment.
Shower chair	A simple height adjustable stool that can be taken into the shower to provide an alternative option to standing, should balance be a problem.

Equipment: Personal Hygiene

Shower toilets	These multi-function toilets combine a toilet and bidet plus have the added comfort of warm air drying.
Tilt-in-Space shower chair	These chairs have a commode function but also fit into a shower cubicle and tilt up to 30 degrees. They are designed for comfort and ease of use.

Commercial sites selling products

We do not endorse any of the following companies and they are listed here to help you find out more information about the equipment listed above.

Allanda	W: www.allaboutincontinence.co.uk	T: 0800 999 5565
Bullen Healthcare	W: www.bullens.com	T: 0800 888 501
Clos-o-Mat	W: www.clos-o-mat.com	T: 0800 374 076
Living Aids Direct	W: www.livingaidsdirect.com	
NRS Healthcare	W: www.nrshealthcare.co.uk	T: 0345 121 8111
Steddy Disability Aids	W: www.disabilityaids.net	T: 01656 668 77

The MSA Trust does not endorse or recommend any specific product mentioned in this factsheet. We do not receive any money from any organisation mentioned.

Further information

The Disabled Living Foundation - DLF is a national charity that provides impartial advice, information and training on daily living aids known as Living Made Easy

T: 0300 123 3084 | W: www.livingmadeeasy.org.uk

The Disabled Living Equipment Centre - DLEC provide a range of services to improve the quality of life of disabled people, their families and carers.

T: 0161 214 4590 | W: www.disabledliving.co.uk

The MSA Trust's Contact Details:

We have MSA Health Care Specialists that support people affected by MSA in the UK and Ireland. If you would like to find the MSA Health Care Specialist for your area, contact us on the details below or use the interactive map here – <https://www.msatrust.org.uk/support-for-you/hcps/>.

T: 0333 323 4591 | E: support@msatrust.org.uk | W: www.msatrust.org.uk

If you have any questions about anything you have read in this factsheet, please contact your MSA Health Care Specialist.

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Disclaimer

We have taken every care to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this publication. However, the information should not be used as a substitute for the advice from appropriately qualified professionals. Speak to your doctor, qualified health care professional or legal professional before taking any action. Please note that personal views and opinions expressed are not necessarily endorsed by the Trust. The resource is produced independently, is not influenced by sponsors and is free from endorsement.

References for this information sheet are available by contacting support@msatrust.org.uk.

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