

# FACT SHEET

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## Being Safe at Home After Lower Limb Amputation



Going home following a stay in hospital can raise mixed feelings. You will need to think about what you might need to make your home easy to get around in a wheelchair and to do your daily activities by yourself.

Your Occupational Therapist on the ward can help you plan your return home. They will explain what equipment may be available and what changes at home can help you.

## What to consider after a lower limb amputation

- **Accessing your home:** If there are steps at your home, you may need extra help to get in and out. This could include finding another way to manage the steps, or arranging for a ramp to be installed. (Please note, the hospital does not provide ramps to take home).



- **Getting around inside your home in your wheelchair:** You may need to move furniture or remove mats and other obstacles to allow space for your wheelchair.

- **Getting on and off furniture:** Raising your bed, chair or sofa can help you move on and off more easily.
- **Lighting:** Good lighting helps you move around safely if you need to get up at night. Sensor or night lights can be useful.
- **Reaching items:** An easi-reacher (pick up aid) can help you pick things up from the floor. Keep things you use often at a height that's easy to reach, like on a table or bench.
- **Railing:** A handrail in areas like the toilet, shower or on steps, can help keep you safe.
- **Additional support:** If you need extra help at home (for example with showering or dressing), talk to the hospital ward staff. They can refer you to community care services.

You will need to do some tasks sitting down until you feel more confident (e.g. dressing, washing dishes or preparing dinner).



## Bathroom considerations

The bathroom can be slippery when wet, which could cause a fall and injure you or your stump.

To keep safe, consider the following:

- **Consider how you transfer into the shower:**
  - Having a seat in the right place, a non-slip mat and – if no handrail is in place – a support person (family or community carer) may help to keep you safe.
  - A hand held shower or wash mitten can make washing easier.
  - In some situations, it is deemed unsafe to access the shower and sponge bathing may be required. In the long term, changes to the bathroom layout may be needed. To see if you qualify for public funding, an assessment with ACC or a Community Occupational Therapist is needed.

**Tip:** There are many aids / products that can help you to live independently and remain as safe as possible. To find out more, talk to the hospital or community team looking after you.



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For more helpful resources, please visit our website: [www.pw.co.nz/resources](http://www.pw.co.nz/resources)

## **Modifying your home**

In some instances, modifying your home (installing a ramp, handrails, widening doors, changing the bathroom set up) will help to keep you safe and independent in the long term. A Community or ACC Occupational Therapist can help you with the process of looking at the options and your eligibility for funding. Please know these are processes that take a long time to work through.

You may consider doing some modifications yourself or paying someone to do them for you. Please know that legal building standards need to be met, so make sure you get the right advice and the right people to help you with this.

## **How to get further help**

If you wish to receive further help from a Community Occupational Therapist, please talk to your GP for a referral.

If you are covered by ACC, please talk to an ACC Case Manager to get an Occupational Therapy (or potential housing modification) referral done.

## Contacts

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