

## Additional tips

Some assistive devices such as canes and walkers should be properly fitted to your physical requirements by a specialist (for example, an occupational therapist).

If the device is expensive, ask if you can rent or borrow one to find out if it meets your needs before you buy it.

Ontario's Assistive Devices Program pays up to 75 per cent for eligible clients. The client will be responsible for paying for the other portion when the item is purchased.

Be sure to get assistive devices from reliable sources, especially if they are medical devices, such as hearing aids or eyeglasses.

Use caution if buying medical devices over the internet or second-hand.

Read and follow all instructions for using your assistive devices. Make sure caregivers also know how to use the devices properly.

Don't hesitate to ask others where they got their useful gadgets or aids.

## Paying for assistive devices

### Assistive Devices Program (ADP)

ADP helps Ontario residents (with a valid OHIP card and long-term physical disabilities of six months or longer) to pay for customized equipment, like wheelchairs and hearing aids, and the cost of specialized supplies, such as those used with ostomies.

If you qualify, 75 per cent of the cost for equipment and supplies is covered. For these items, ADP is billed directly by the authorized supplier and you pay the other 25 per cent when you buy the item.

In some cases, you receive a series of payments throughout the year to help cover the cost of supplies.

For information on how to qualify, apply and find a vendor for these types of equipment and supplies, visit ADP website at [www.ontario.ca/page/assistive-devices-program](http://www.ontario.ca/page/assistive-devices-program).

### Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC)

VAC offers financial assistance to eligible clients who need to purchase assistive devices. Access to these benefits depends on your eligibility status and your specific health needs. For more information call toll-free 1-866-522-2122 or visit the VAC website at <https://www.veterans.gc.ca/>

## Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit

As a senior 65 years or older in Ontario, you could qualify for a tax credit to help with the cost of making your home safer and more accessible. For more information, contact the Ontario Government by calling 1-866-668-8297 or visit [www.ontario.ca/page/healthy-homes-renovation-tax-credit](http://www.ontario.ca/page/healthy-homes-renovation-tax-credit).

### Personal Health Insurance Plan

Your own health insurance may cover some or all of the device cost not paid by ADP. Check your policy or contact your provider to see if you are eligible for further compensation.

### Other organizations that help

Some community and non-profit organizations such as the Rotary Club, Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), Halton Region or Red Cross may offer assistance to obtain assistive devices.

For more information, visit [www.halton.ca](http://www.halton.ca) or call 311.



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[halton.ca](http://halton.ca) 311

# Assistive Devices



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## Fast Facts

Older Adult Advisory Committee  
(OAAC)



## Why use assistive devices?

If you find that you experience discomfort or fear doing activities you once loved, or if you've started to avoid certain situations, it's possible that an assistive device can help you overcome your difficulties.

Assistive devices include medical equipment, mobility aids, information technologies, practical daily aids and gadgets to suit many different needs.

By easing the strain of daily activities at home, work, or play, assistive devices can:

- improve your quality of life;
- help maintain your independence; and
- improve your safety and reduce your risk of injury.

Don't let your disability or sensory loss infringe on your lifestyle, especially when tools and devices exist to help you overcome these obstacles.

Assistive devices can have a positive impact on your mental health. By living an active and social lifestyle, you can remain independent, confident and positive.

## Examples of assistive devices

Here are a few examples of common activities and assistive devices that can make them easier and safer.

**Bathing/toileting:** grab bars, hand-held shower head, bath seat with arm rails, non-slip floor mat, commode chair, raised toilet seat.

**Dressing:** long-handled shoe-horn, velcro fastenings, sock pullers.

**Preparing food:** easy-grip utensils, side-opening oven door, height-adjustable cupboards and counters, automatic-stop kettle, pouring aid, sliding cupboard drawers.

**Moving/physical activities:** cane, walker, wheelchair, electric lift/recline chair, power chair, scooter, bed rail, superpole.

**Using the telephone:** loud-ringing phone, flashing light ring indicator, large numbers/buttons, auto-dialling, phone with hearing aid compatibility feature.

**Enjoying hobbies:** playing card holder, long-handled gardening tools, television remote with large buttons or captioning button, modified computer keyboards, audio books, magnifying glass, playing card shuffler.

## Getting started

Consult a health care professional such as your doctor, pharmacist, audiologist, optometrist or an occupational therapist to find out what is available to suit your needs. They can tell you whether you should be medically assessed before choosing a particular device.

For devices such as corrective eyeglasses and hearing aids, you should be assessed by a medical professional.

Professional assessment is also recommended when purchasing an expensive assistive device such as a wheelchair, especially if you think you may qualify for complete or partial reimbursement.

## Do I need a prescription?

Most forms of reimbursement (for example, Assistive Devices Program, insurance, funding agency) require that you undergo an assessment and obtain a prescription for any refund application.

## Where to find assistive devices

Many assistive devices for enhancement of daily life are available in general and specialty stores.

For eyeglasses and hearing aids find lists of specialists in the yellow pages under 'Opticians' and 'Hearing Aids' or ask your doctor for a list of specialists.

For devices such as wheelchairs, walkers, bath seats and grab bars see lists of stores under 'Medical supplies' or 'Wheelchairs' in the yellow pages.

Many smaller medical assistive devices, are available in general or specialty stores, including pharmacies and stores that sell medical supplies.

Hardware and department stores offer many assistive devices, too, including wheeled garbage cans, easy-grip utensils and intercom systems.

You can find items such as screen-reading software (for people with reduced vision) and modified keyboards and mice (for people with limited mobility) at specialty computer stores.