"Why Do I Need a Portable Shower?"

This seems obvious, but there is usually another reason why a bath or shower is not realistic. Perhaps you are a quad who cannot get onto a bath bench, or who has no one capable of safely lifting you into a tub. You might be simply an older individual who no longer feels stable enough to step into a bathtub, or to stand in a shower stall. Or, because of the slick surface of a tub or shower, you may feel at high risk for slipping or falling.

You should consider a portable wheelchair shower.

But, you say, there are the sliding benches that you can get onto outside of the tub, then slide into the tub (assuming you can lift your legs over the edge of the tub.) But then you are either just sitting on a bench and not down in the water, or you have a curtain that is lifted and cannot keep a shower spray in the tub without making a big mess, or you have a bench that will lower down into the tub. That does allow you to get into the water. Unfortunately, units of that type are prone to failure with exposure to soap, oils, and even just the body oils in the waste water. Safety then can become a very real issue. None of those concerns apply to a portable, sit-down, wheelchair shower stall.

Ah, you say, but I have a bathroom already remodeled so I can roll my wheelchair in, get a great shower, and roll back out. My caregiver just gets in with me and helps me with my shower. Good for you. Not so good for the caregiver, usually.
But, if you could have a shower where your caregiver could stay OUTSIDE of the shower, while you stayed INSIDE, wouldn’t that be nice? To continue the paraphrasing of the Jeff Foxworthy line: “You should consider a portable wheelchair shower.”

Not to mention that your beautiful, expensive remodeled shower only enables you to have that shower when you are in your home, kept there by the fact that you cannot be assured of safe, effective showering when you leave your home.

Holidays happen frequently throughout the year, and we all know that holidays are a time when family and friends really like to get together, but if you are a family member who can only have people come to your house because of your remodeled shower and built in accessibility features, you are being denied the opportunity to get out, to travel, to go to your kids’ houses, etc.

Hotels are notorious for offering “Accessible” rooms, but when you get there you may find that they simply have larger doorways, and possibly a bench in the shower, with the controls located in such a way that you cannot reach them from the bench, so you have no ability to set or control your water temperature or water flow. And, they may only have a very few rooms that even offer these minimal amenities. You might want to consider a portable wheelchair shower. They are light weight, fold flat when not in use, and you can even get travel cases that the airlines will accept.

And, oh my goodness, what if you don’t OWN your home, or simply can’t afford to remodel? Well, your options narrow considerably. But, with a portable shower stall that you can set up only when you are ready to use it, that you can roll in, shower, roll back out, then fold away for storage after each use, and which costs about 1/10th the price of a bathroom remodel, you TOO could have the luxury and safety of a warm shower no matter where you live or want to go.

I think you get the idea by now for why you might want to consider a portable shower stall, but perhaps I should elaborate on how a portable shower works, what the differences are in offerings, and options of different models to meet specific needs.
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First, let me explain that when we invented and patented the first portable shower stall for use with a wheelchair, which we branded as the FAWSsit™ (Fold Away Wheelchair Shower, that you sit in), we did so because there simply were no products on the market that met our own needs for showering a person who was too incapacitated to get into a tub or a shower on her own, who was too large for us to lift into the tub, and who was financially and medically not in a position to remodel. Because of her condition, we had to be able to leave her in her wheelchair, roll her in, assist with her bathing, then roll her back out. Because her home was small, we needed to have a product which could be set up anytime and anywhere there was simply access to a sink, which did not need to be assembled and dissembled each time it was used, but that could simply fold up and be stored easily. It had to enable adequate quantities of water to give a comfortable shower for as long as the water was flowing. It also, therefore, had to be able to REMOVE potentially large quantities of water and to do so efficiently so that when the shower was over, she could be wheeled back out immediately, dried off and taken care of without having to wait for a tub or shower to drain, as is the case with the walk in tubs. And, to address her need for some assistance, we designed it to be low enough to allow a caregiver to assist with the showering, but to do so from the outside of the shower stall.

This product worked so well for her that we patented it and started to make it available to others with disabilities who were in a similar position. We have now been selling these for over 8 years and have literally hundreds of veterans, hundreds of seniors, hundreds of permanently disabled individuals, and many, many individuals who have temporary disabilities who now benefit from our products. We have individuals with disabilities who like to travel who have purchased our S2000 Standard model in a travel case; we have individuals who require a little additional space or who may need to use foot rests who use our SS4040 SuperStandard; those who require a slight tilt to their wheelchairs, or who are bariatric sized who use our B5000 Bariatric model; and even individuals who have disabilities which are so severe that they require reclining wheelchairs or even gurneys along with the full assistance of a care attendant who use our R3000 Recliner model. (You can see these models and learn a lot more about these products at www.fawssit.com.)

Finally, though, I want to talk about quality and longevity for portable showers because there are companies attempting to offer portable showers made of plastic, or ones that need to be assembled using tools each time they are used, or which purport to be less expensive, but quote pricing "ala carte". They require you to figure out that you will need ALL of the components to make the unit work. You can use PVC for products, but keep in mind that each time you screw into plastic, you risk stripping the PVC and in a short time, the screws will not hold. Aluminum frame units are lighter weight, but considerably stronger. And, by being riveted, they can hold up for many years of daily usage.

Pumps, too, need to be strong enough to remove waste water quickly, or you will need to sit in the shower stall until all of the water is drained out. We learned early on that "off-the-shelf" fountain pumps simply could not keep up with the volume of water, so we had a pump custom designed which could not only remove water quickly, but it could run in the absence of continuous water flow without burning out, and it could be mounted to the shower frame to prevent risks of electrocution from pumps that were left laying on the floor. So, while the initial price may seem attractive for "knock off" portable showers, I would only caution you to do your homework so you don’t literally “throw money down the drain!”

Let me close this explanation of “Why Do I Need a Portable Shower” with just one final statement, which is our company byline: “Because People in Wheelchairs Deserve Showers too!”

Judy Seidmeyer, R.Ph., F.A.C.A.