

TRAVELING TIPS

HAVE YOU HAD A SIMILAR SITUATION? If so, the following suggestions and possible solutions may help reduce your anxiety when you are invited to stay with family and friends, during the upcoming holidays or anytime.

Don't be afraid to speak to your relatives and friends openly about your concerns -- you might be surprised at the solutions they may come up with. After all, you received the invitation because they care about you and want you to visit. Perhaps they will offer you a room on the first floor or their master bath, which has a more accessible stall shower.

Ask if they can pick up a shower chair for you at the local pharmacy or hardware store. These have become common items. The same goes for a toilet seat riser if that will make your stay more comfortable.

Sit down and make a list of everything you'll need to bring

with you, from extra liners and socks to alcohol and skin creams and any tools for minor repairs.

Bring a folding wheelchair with you for shopping trips or sightseeing. If you don't have one, think about renting one at your destination so you don't get overly tired out. The same goes for navigating the airport. Airports are extremely busy at holiday times, so take advantage of the help available and use wheelchair assistance to get through security lines and to your gate when you need to make connections.

Be sure to request preferential seating on airplanes so that you can be as comfortable as possible. Call ahead after you have your reservations in order to accomplish this.

If you have any worries about the TSA security process, visit their Web site at tsa.gov/specialneeds for complete information regarding traveling with prosthetics. You should never be asked to remove your shoes or your prosthetic devices. You'll need to be scanned and you are entitled to a private screening. TSA has a traveler's hotline number, TSA CARES (855/787-2227), which you can call for more information regarding your specific questions and concerns.

Most importantly, pack a smile and a good attitude! Enjoy your family and friends and have a wonderful holiday. Don't be afraid to ask for assistance; most people are very eager to help!