



Persons with disabilities face many secondary health problems, yet they are less likely to get routine medical care than people without disabilities. You can help change that.

By making your facilities accessible you convey a sense of welcome for people with disabilities. Most of all, you comply with the requirements set by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). This is a civil rights law that prohibits

discrimination against persons with disabilities on the basis of their disability in programs and services that receive federal financial assistance.

To comply with this law, you can start by making a few changes to your office. Most changes can be made at a nominal cost – or at no cost to you. Just follow these tips to help make your medical office accessible:

The waiting room

Why it matters: The right seating layout can prevent a person who uses a wheelchair from feeling out of place.

Accessible tips: ① Seat height should be 20-22 inches, allowing a patient to get up from a chair with no strain. ② 36 inches minimum is provided for circulation behind a group of chairs, allowing a wheelchair to move about; 32 inches in front of the chairs for ambulatory movement.

What you can do:

③ Remove a few chairs. This allows a wheelchair to fit, putting the user at ease.





Reception counter window

Why it matters: If a counter is too high, a person who uses a wheelchair may have trouble using it to fill out forms or have face-to-face interaction.

Accessible tips: ① Counter height should be no higher than 36 inches from the ground and ② 26 inches wide.

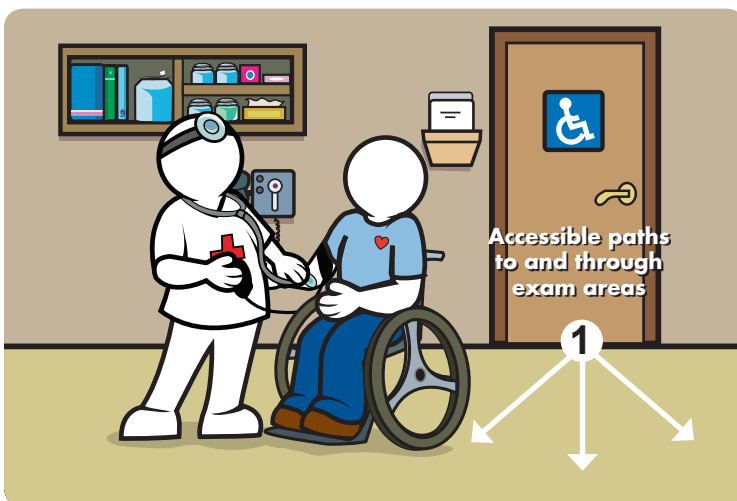
What you can do: Provide a clipboard, allowing a person who uses a wheelchair to fill out forms.

Circulation paths

Why it matters: People who are blind or have low vision may stumble over objects in the way. If they are unable to detect an object by using the sweep of their cane, they could get hurt.

Accessible tips: ① Accessible routes should connect to other public and common use spaces. ② Clear walkways, halls, corridors or aisles of objects protruding into circulation paths from the side or from posts.

What you can do: Remove objects that obstruct paths. Move large objects like planters or coffee tables out of the way.

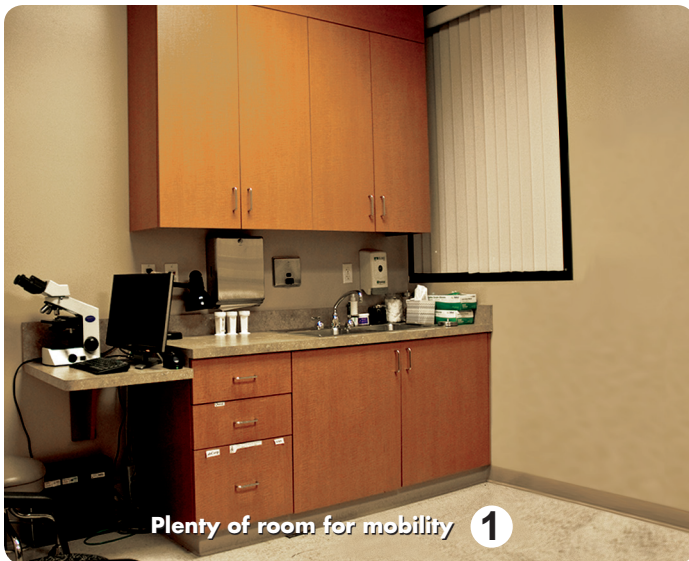


Exam room

Why it matters: Most exam rooms are too small for a person using a wheelchair or for someone with a mobility disability.

Accessible tips: ① To make your exam room accessible, start with an accessible path to and through the room. This allows patients to enter and move about.

What you can do: Provide at least one exam room with accessible features; more such rooms are needed in a large clinic.



Plenty of room for mobility 1

Turning space inside exam room

Why it matters: A person using a wheelchair needs enough space to approach the exam table and any other equipment.

Accessible tips: 1 30 by 48 inches is the minimum amount required, allowing a person using a wheelchair to approach the side and transfer to table.

What you can do: Clear up floor space along both sides of an adjustable height exam table.

Doorways

Why it matters: Some doorways are too narrow for a wheelchair to pass through.

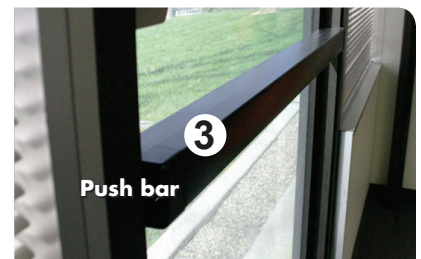
Accessible tips:

1 A door should offer enough clear width, maneuvering clearance and accessible hardware. An accessible doorway must have a minimum clear opening of 32 inches when the door is opened 90 degrees.

What you can do: Check the hallway outside the door and the space inside the door. Keep it free of objects that could interfere with the maneuvering clearance or accessible route.



Door handle mounted no higher than 48 inches from floor



Push bar



Lever handle



Doorways are minimally 32 inches wide when door is open 90 degrees

Door knobs

Why it matters: For some persons with a mobility disability, a door knob is hard to open because it requires tight grasping, pinching and twisting.

Accessible tips: 1 Mounting hardware for accessible door passage should be no higher than 48 inches from the floor.

What you can do: Install door handles with an easy-to-grasp shape which can be used with one hand without tight grasping, pinching or twisting. Here are some good options: 2 Lever handle. 3 Push bar.



Floor space on both sides of exam table

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Open space by exam table

Why it matters: Some persons can only transfer from the right or left side of exam table.

Accessible tips: ① & ② Provide clear floor space on both sides of exam table.

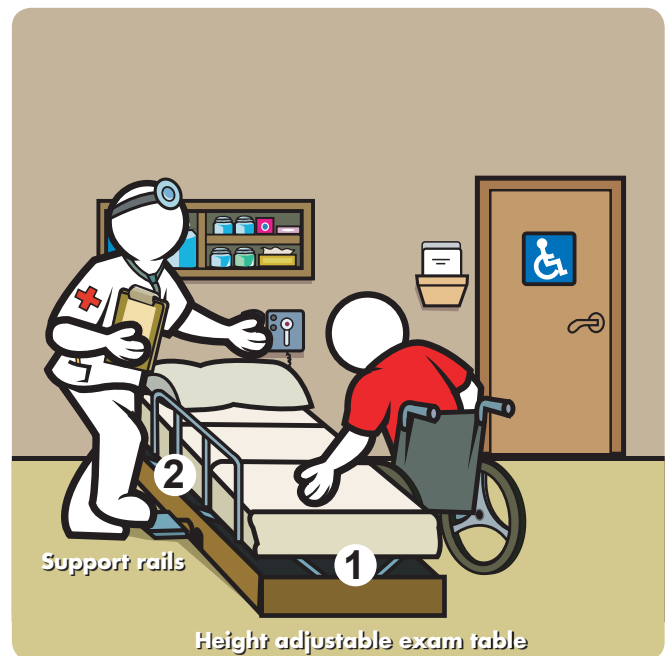
What you can do: If you have more than one exam room, reverse the furniture layout. Move aside objects like chairs or waste baskets.

Exam table

Why it matters: For most people with a mobility disability a traditional fixed height exam table is too high.

Accessible tips: ① So patients can transfer from their wheelchair, use a height adjustable exam table. ② It should have a support rail along one side and lower to height of a wheelchair seat, 17-19 inches (or lower) from floor. Plus, it should have elements like rails, straps or cushions to stabilize and support a person during transfer and while on the table.

What you can do: Use pillows, rolled up towels or foam wedges to stabilize and position the patient on the table.



Support rails

Height adjustable exam table