



Free Medical Equipment: Quick Start Cheat Sheet

Use this 1-page guide to quickly find and request durable medical equipment (DME) such as wheelchairs, walkers, hospital beds, oxygen equipment, CPAP supplies, and bathroom safety items.

Emergency or Urgent Need

Medical emergency: Call 911.

Urgent equipment need: Contact a hospital social worker/discharge planner, your doctor's office, or your local Area Agency on Aging (AAA).

Who to contact	Why it helps	How to reach them
Area Agency on Aging (AAA)	Local referrals and help finding equipment loan programs	Call 1-800-677-1116 (Eldercare Locator)
211 (Information & Referral)	Local resources including equipment banks and charities	Dial 2-1-1 (24/7 in many areas)
Hospital social worker / discharge planner	Fastest path to equipment after hospitalization	Call the hospital and ask for Social Work/Discharge Planning
Your doctor's office	Prescription and documentation (often required)	Call and ask for a DME order/prescription

What counts as DME

Generally, DME is reusable equipment that is medically necessary, prescribed by a clinician, suitable for home use, and expected to last 3+ years.

Often included: wheelchairs (manual/power), walkers/rollators, hospital beds, special mattresses, oxygen equipment, CPAP machines, shower chairs, toilet safety frames, patient lifts.

Often not covered: items mainly for comfort/convenience, equipment designed for use outside the home, home modifications (ramps/grab bars), many over-the-counter pharmacy items.

Your 3 fastest paths to low-cost or free equipment

- **Insurance (Medicare/Medicaid/VA):** May cover most essentials with a prescription and approved suppliers.
- **Equipment loan closets / banks:** Local nonprofit programs that loan or give used equipment (inventory varies).
- **Disease- or community-based groups:** Organizations that lend equipment for specific conditions or local communities.