



Questions You Can Ask...

Self-advocacy is one of the most powerful tools you have as a traveler living with spinal muscular atrophy (SMA) and having the right talking points ready helps make every conversation easier. These questions can be used before you book and when you arrive at your destination.



When starting any accessibility conversation, try leading with:

"Hi, my name is [NAME], and I'm very interested in your [property / flight / vehicle / venue]. I use a [wheelchair / walker / cane] and have a few questions to ensure the space will meet my accessibility needs."



Hotels and Short-Term Rentals

- ✓ "What are the door widths for the bathroom(s) and bedroom(s)?"
- ✓ "Does the shower have a roll-in design, or is there a lip or step to enter?"
- ✓ "What is the width of the shower opening?"
- ✓ "Are there grab bars in the shower? If so, how many and where are they installed?"
- ✓ "Are there grab bars next to the toilet? If so, how many and where are they installed?"
- ✓ For a hotel, ask, "Do your showers have built-in soap dispensers? If so, how high are they from the ground?"
- ✓ "What is the height of the bed from the floor to the top of the mattress?"
- ✓ "Are there outlets near the bed, and how high are they from the floor?"
- ✓ "What is the clearance space under the bed, from the floor to the bottom of the bed frame?"
- ✓ "Does the bathroom have a wheel-under sink? If so, what is the clearance height and depth underneath?"
- ✓ "Are there outlets near the bathroom sink? If so, where are they located?"
- ✓ "Are stairs required to access any amenities or common areas? If so, what alternatives are available for wheelchair access?"
- ✓ "Is the entrance to the [hotel / short-term rental] zero-step, or is there a ramp available?"

Everyone is different and may have different accessibility needs.

Other questions you may want to ask are:

- ✓ "Can I please reserve an accessible room that is close to an elevator?"
- ✓ "Does the bathroom have non-slip surfaces?"
- ✓ "Do your staff have experience assisting guests with wheelchairs or other medical equipment?"



Airlines

- ✓ “Is there anything I should do at check-in to inform airline staff of my accessibility needs?”
- ✓ “What documentation do you require for my wheelchair battery?”
- ✓ “Is an aisle wheelchair available for boarding and deplaning?”
- ✓ “What is your process for returning my wheelchair to the jet bridge upon landing?”
- ✓ “What is your claims process if my mobility device is damaged during transport?”
- ✓ “Can you confirm I am booked in an accessible seat with moveable armrests?”
 - If your assigned seat doesn’t have movable armrests, be sure to notify airline staff, either in advance or at check-in, so they can assist if needed.
 - You can also ask if another seat with movable armrests is available.
 - Most importantly, if you anticipate needing extra time, take advantage of early boarding to allow ample space and time for your transfer.



Parking

- ✓ “Do you have accessible parking onsite, and where is it located?”
- ✓ “How many accessible parking spots are available?”
- ✓ “How far is the accessible parking area/spot from an accessible entrance to the hotel, airport, or property?”



Transportation Providers

- ✓ “Can your vehicle accommodate a power wheelchair? What are the weight and dimension limits?”
- ✓ “Does the vehicle have a ramp or lift?”
- ✓ “How far in advance do I need to book to guarantee an accessible vehicle?”



Venues and Attractions

- ✓ “Where is your accessible entrance?”
- ✓ “Are accessible restrooms available on-site, and where are they located?”
- ✓ “Is there step-free access to all areas of the venue?”



Cory's Tip: Self-Advocacy

If asking for accommodations feels uncomfortable, you're not alone. It can feel awkward at first, but remember, you deserve to have access and a smooth travel experience just like anyone else.

Self-advocacy gets easier with practice. One thing that helps is being prepared ahead of time. Write down your questions or keep a guide like this handy so you don't feel put on the spot.



Cory L., SMA Patient Advocate, SMA Type 2

I've learned that being specific is key. Instead of asking, "Is it accessible?" I ask things like:

- ✓ "Can you tell me the exact doorway width?"
- ✓ "Is the shower truly roll-in with no step or lip?"
- ✓ "Can you send photos of the bathroom and entrance?"

I also always ask for photos or videos when possible because accessibility can look very different from place to place.

And don't be afraid to follow up or ask again if something isn't clear. You're not being difficult. You're making sure your needs are met.

Your voice is one of your most powerful travel tools. The more you use it, the more confident you'll feel.

Visit www.SMashingMyLimits.com to sign up for updates and be the first to know when new resources are available.