

# Sitz Bath

## Overview and Instructions

This handout explains what a sitz bath is and gives instructions for how to take a sitz bath in the bathtub and using a sitz bath kit over the toilet.

### **What is a sitz bath?**

A sitz bath is a soothing way to help relieve discomfort that you might experience after a procedure. You can create a sitz bath in the bathtub or by using a plastic sitz bath kit that fits over the toilet – kits can be purchased at a local pharmacy or found online by searching “sitz bath”.

If getting in and out of a bathtub is a challenge, we recommend using a sitz bath kit. Sitz baths can be used as often as recommended by your care team to ease discomfort but be sure to let your skin dry between baths. Below are instructions for how to take a sitz bath.

### **How to take a sitz bath in the bathtub**

1. Make sure the bathtub has been cleaned before taking your first sitz bath. You want to be sure you're not exposing the affected area to unwanted bacteria, which can lead to infection.
2. Fill the tub with three to four inches of warm water. The water will feel warmer on your lower body than it does on your hands, so keep that in mind when choosing the right temperature.
3. Carefully step into the tub and soak your lower body for 15 to 20 minutes, or until the water is cool.
4. When finished, use a towel to gently pat dry the affected area. If you'd prefer not to have fabric touching the area, you can use a hairdryer on low, set to cool or warm heat only.
5. Thoroughly clean and dry the bathtub after each use to prevent bacteria from forming.

## **How to take a sitz bath using a sitz bath kit with a basin**

### **Sitz bath kit**

A sitz bath kit typically includes:

- A basin that fits over the toilet seat
- A bag that holds water
- A plastic tube to spray the water, and
- A clamp to control the water flow through the tube.

You can use just the basin part of the sitz bath kit, or you can use the basin, bag and tube to control the flow of water. Below are instructions for both options.

### **Using a basin without the bag and tube:**

1. Make sure the basin has been cleaned before using it, even if it's brand new. You want to be sure you're not exposing the affected area to unwanted bacteria, which can lead to infection.
2. Lift the toilet seat and set basin on rim of toilet, then lower the toilet seat to secure the basin in place.
3. Pour warm water into the basin. The water will feel warmer on your lower body than it does on your hands, so keep that in mind when choosing the right temperature. If your basin doesn't have a vent, be careful when pouring in the water so it doesn't overflow.
4. Sit on the basin for 15 to 20 minutes, or until the water is cool.
5. When finished, use a towel to gently pat dry the affected area. If you'd prefer not to have fabric touching the area, you can use a hairdryer on low, set to cool or warm heat only.
6. Thoroughly clean and dry the basin after each use to prevent bacteria from forming.

### **Using a basin with the bag and tube:**

1. Make sure the basin has been cleaned before using it, even if it's brand new. You want to be sure you're not exposing the affected area to unwanted bacteria, which can lead to infection.
2. Place the tube through the hole in the basin and clip it to the inside of the basin.
3. Clamp the tube so the water doesn't come out before you are ready.
4. Fill the bag with warm water. The water will feel warmer on your lower body than it does on your hands, so keep that in mind when choosing the right temperature.
5. Lift the toilet seat and set basin on rim of toilet, then lower the toilet seat to secure the basin in place.
6. Hold the bag above the toilet seat. Hang the bag somewhere if you can, but it's not necessary. What is important is that the bag is elevated so the water can flow downward.

### Using a basin with the bag and tube, continued

7. Sit on the basin.
8. Unclamp the tube.
9. Feel the water slowly release into the basin. Once the bag has emptied, you can soak in the water that has collected in the basin for 15 to 20 minutes, or until the water is cool.
10. When finished, use a towel to gently pat the affected area. If you'd prefer not to have fabric touching the area, you can use a hairdryer on low, set to cool or warm heat only.
11. Thoroughly clean and dry the basin after each use to prevent bacteria from forming.

Additional instructions: