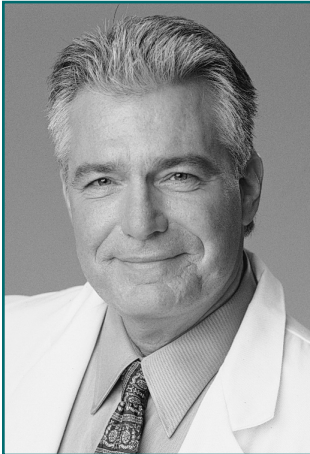


Naturally Well Today

Healing with Nature's Medicine

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Living Well



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The Menace at Your Fingertips

We do many things for the sake of tradition. We eat dessert after a meal rather than before, we shake hands when we meet, et cetera. However, tradition needs to be constantly re-examined in the light of new information. For example, a handshake is a great way to pass germs from person to person. An impressive amount of research over the years shows that human hands are loaded with all kinds of viruses and bacteria. You pick them up from the things you touch—other people, random surfaces, and your own body and clothing.

As disgusting as it is to think about, one of the most communicable types of bacteria is the one that comes from cleaning yourself after you use the toilet. Fecal bacteria make their way onto shopping cart handles, computer keyboards, and telephone pushbuttons. They're even in the dish of mixed nuts on the bar in the corner tavern.

Short of wearing a mask and gloves, there isn't much you can do about contamination when you're out in public. However, there's an effective solution for your own home—and, if the idea spreads as fast as bacteria do, we might see a great improvement in public health in a very short time.

Wash Your Troubles Away

I'm sure you wash your hands after using the toilet. Surprisingly, many people don't. Investigations show that only about two-thirds of the people who use a public restroom wash their hands. Even those who do wash probably aren't doing the best job of it—using plenty of soap while getting the backs of the hands, under the fingernails, and between the fingers. The real answer lies in stopping the problem right at the source.

The French have the right idea with their *bidets*. The device washes you well enough. However, if you've ever encountered one, you know there are several problems. It's traditionally used only by women, and it isn't the most ergonomically friendly object. It also requires additional space in the bathroom and its own plumbing.

I was introduced to a better idea a decade ago in Japan and Korea. I was more critical than curious at first, and more intimidated than invited. It took a few days to build up my courage to give it a try—but when I did finally try it, admiration and advocacy soon followed. The washlet is a wonder of simplicity, ergonomics, and hygiene enhancement. Plus, it's for use by men as well as women.

The washlet fits on your toilet just like the seat you have now, but it comes equipped to efficiently clean and dry you. I've used various brands, and I've settled on the Brondell Swash. It has two built-in and hidden retractable water wands that

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will hygienically clean your posterior or feminine areas with a warm stream of fresh water. You determine the temperature with the touch of a button. Some models have a control panel on the side, but I recommend the remote control for the easiest reach and use.

All washlets have similar characteristics, but Brondell (named after the man who invented the flush toilet) has perfected the washlet for American households by providing a simple, functional, sturdy, and comfortable design that is truly easy to install and use. It comes complete with everything you need to install it yourself—including a universal tool—and it can be ready to use in under an hour. (I cheated and called a plumber. After he installed mine, he ordered one for his family!)

I've tried several washlets from various manufacturers, and Brondell is my favorite. However, the best-known brand is Toto—the world's leading plumbing manufacturer—and they have some great choices as well. Either Brondell or Toto is the way to go since other brands may be cheaper but tend to also have problems.

Toto's *Neorest* model is the most sophisticated washlet on the market, and is installed in place of a standard toilet. It costs many thousands of dollars, whereas a Brondell washlet fits on your current toilet for somewhere between \$400 and \$600. It may seem like a lot of money just to clean your bottom, but you'll find that it's money well spent.

Who Needs a Washlet?

Certainly the superior hygiene from a washlet is its number-one attraction. But for many people, it's simply easier to use than the traditional method of reaching and wiping. Even the softest paper can irritate sensitive skin, and some people have trouble reaching the proper area. You should consider using a washlet if anyone in your home is dealing with:

- Hemorrhoids,
- Incontinence,
- Anal fissures,
- Rectal bleeding,
- Pruritus ani (constant rectal itching),
- IBS or Crohn's disease,
- Diarrhea,
- Obesity, or
- Mobility and disability issues.

DR. MARCUS LAUX

Dr. Marcus Laux is a licensed naturopathic physician who received his doctorate from the National College of Naturopathic Medicine (NCNM) in Portland, OR. Dr. Laux has served as an Assistant Adjunct Professor at the Emperors College of Traditional Oriental Medicine (CA), Clinical Professor of OB/GYN at NCNM, and is currently an Affiliate Faculty Member at Bastyr University (WA). After 15 years of private practice, Dr. Laux's focus is now on researching, writing, and lecturing on science-based natural medicine. He appears regularly in the media—including CNN, BBC, and Fox—and is the coauthor of *Natural Woman*, *Natural Menopause*. He is a leading educator and scientific advisor to the Natural Products industry, and presents continuing education for medical doctors and pharmacists worldwide.

Dr. Laux works closely with Natural Medica, a subsidiary of Healthy Directions, LLC, developing his unique formulations that supply many of the hard-to-find nutrients he recommends. Dr. Laux is compensated by Natural Medica on the sales of these nutritional supplements and health products, which allows him to continue devoting his life to researching innovative, effective health solutions.

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