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S. SAULSON

2,947,995

SITZ BATH

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Fig. 1.

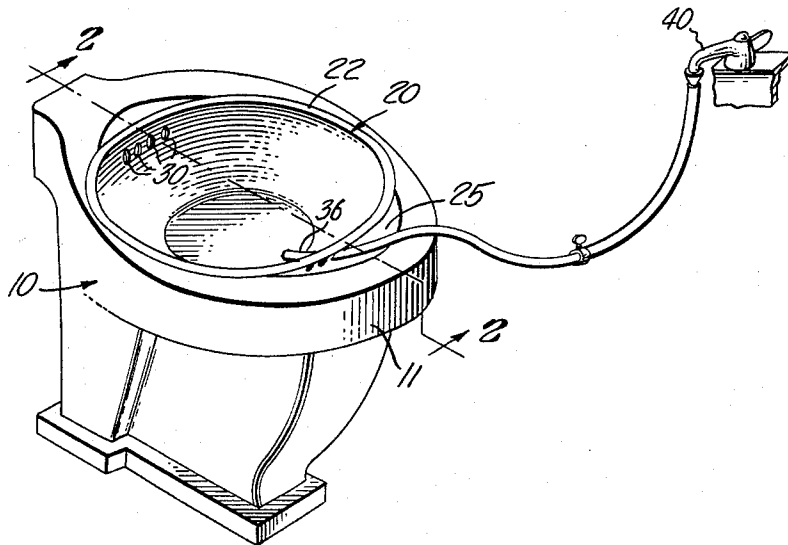


Fig. 2.

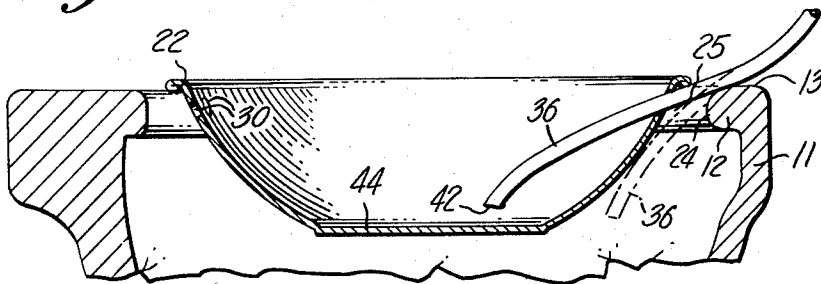


Fig. 3.

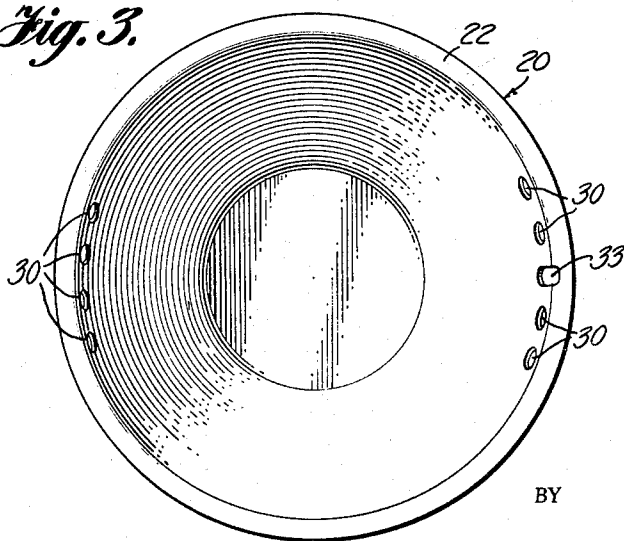
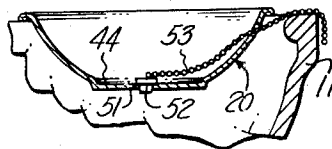


Fig. 4.



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2,947,995

SITZ BATH

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4 Claims. (Cl. 4—6)

This application relates to an improved device for therapeutic care and treatment of the perineal, rectal or genital areas of the human body.

The invention is more particularly concerned with a device for use in the post-operative care and treatment of patients who have undergone surgery, such as hemorrhoidectomy or other operative procedure on the rectum, anus, or other perineal regions of the body, as well as for use in non-surgical therapy and hygienic care of these areas. The therapeutic care and treatment normally requires bathing of the area in warm water, which may or may not be medicated, for relatively lengthy periods several times each day, to minimize pain and promote healing. This post-operative treatment is usually required to be performed for a number of days following surgery. In the case of a hemorrhoidectomy, for example, the practice generally is for the patient to utilize such post-operative treatment for five to twenty days immediately after the surgery.

In hospitals, this post-operative therapy is customarily performed in so-called sitz baths installed as permanent fixtures, or by means of a mobile sitz bath. The permanently installed sitz baths are not only costly in themselves, but also entail provision of a separate room to accommodate the required number of them. The mobile devices generally consist of a metal framework in the shape of a chair, on which is fixedly or removably mounted a pan into which water may be poured and into which the perineal regions of the body will extend when the patient is seated in the chair. In the more desirable of these devices, they are fashioned also for mounting a heater assembly thereon, in order to maintain the water in the pan at a suitable temperature before the patient is seated on the chair for the treatment.

Although the mobile sitz bath devices used in hospitals for these post-operative procedures adequately serve the therapeutic purposes of the treatment, they are expensive to the hospitals, not only in terms of their initial relatively high cost (of the order of several hundred dollars each) but also in terms of the labor required for cleaning and sterilizing the seat and the pan, as well as of the space requirements they impose upon the hospitals for storing them during periods when they are not in actual use by a patient.

Patients who have undergone surgery of the type referred to above are nowadays permitted and encouraged to leave the hospital within two days, or at most several days, following the surgery. Hence, the post-operative care of the affected areas for relieving pain and promoting full recovery, requires the patient to carry on this treatment at home.

For this purpose, the patient may sit in a tub of warm water for the prescribed period time, several times a day. This procedure is troublesome and objectionable to most patients, as it requires the patient to undress and dress for each such period of treatment. Furthermore, many people frequently suffer debilitating or other

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ill effects from relatively long periods of contact with water at the elevated temperature used.

For carrying on such treatment by the patient at home, there have heretofore been proposed several forms of sitz baths, consisting essentially of a pan or basin for holding a supply of water, and arranged to be supported, by an outwardly extending flange thereon, upon the upper edge of the toilet bowl, or upon top of the toilet seat, so that a considerable portion of the basin will extend down into the toilet bowl.

Portable sitz baths of this type are shown in the patents to Oliver, Nos. 2,427,807 and 2,450,607. In the first of these patents, the basin is provided at its front and rear ends with spillways so that when the basin is suspended from a toilet seat, liquid that might otherwise be splashed over the sides of the basin is directed by way of the spillways into the toilet bowl. In Patent No. 2,450,607, the basin is held within an annular ring formed to rest on the seat and having a depending flange to provide an annular channel between the outer surface of the basin and the inner surface of the flange, for conveying the overflow from the basin directly into the toilet bowl.

Another form of portable sitz bath adapted for use with a conventional toilet bowl by supporting the same from the upper edge of the toilet bowl or from the toilet seat, is disclosed in the patent to Graber No. 2,426,303. In the device of the Graber patent, provision is made for maintaining the water in the basin at a desired temperature, by affixing a water jacket to the exterior of the basin so as to surround and enclose the lower end thereof and arranged to be supplied with hot or cold water through a flexible tube connected to a faucet of a conventional bathroom lavatory, the water jacket being arranged so as to permit excess water supplied to the jacket to overflow directly into the toilet bowl. Access of the outlet end of the flexible tube to the water jacket is provided by openings formed in the flange by which the basin is supported on the toilet bowl, these openings extending a short distance downwardly from the flange into the basin at the front and rear thereof. These openings also provide for the overflow of the liquid from the basin proper directly into the toilet bowl.

While portable sitz baths of the type shown in the abovementioned patents would obviously be less costly than the mobile devices currently in use by hospitals, and can be merely lifted from the toilet bowl after each use and stored in a space of small area, they do not meet other requirements essential to provide a practical form of device for use either in hospitals or in homes, for performing the therapeutic procedures referred to above. Thus, among other things, it is essential that such devices have provision whereby the patient can, while in seated position on the device, conveniently control the supply of water to the basin, and its maintenance therein at a predetermined fixed level and at a desired temperature during the soaking period. Desirable, also, are means for enabling the patient, at the conclusion of the soaking, and while still in the seated position occupied during the soaking period, to drain the water from the bath, and thereby avoid the annoyance of having water from the perineal regions trickling down along the thighs and legs when the patient arises from the sitting position. It is desirable also that the introduction of the water into the basin be arranged so as to promote rapid mixing of incoming water with that contained in the basin and so as to avoid impingement of the incoming stream upon the patient's buttocks. Such an arrangement has the further advantage of precluding the possibility of water splashing and wetting the clothing of the patient while sitting on the basin.

This invention is concerned particularly with a port-

able sitz bath for use in therapy and other care of the types set forth, constructed to meet the above-mentioned requirements and otherwise to avoid the shortcomings and disadvantages of the stationary, mobile and portable sitz baths heretofore proposed.

The invention also aims to provide a sitz bath of this character, which will lend itself to use in hospitals as well as in homes, and which may be inexpensively fabricated from various materials suitable for the purpose.

According to the invention, there is provided a sitz bath consisting essentially of a basin configured and dimensioned so as to enable it to be supported at its upper marginal edge, upon laterally opposed portions of the rim of the standard or conventional toilet bowl, in a position such that the body of the basin extending down into the toilet bowl is spaced several inches from the rim of the toilet bowl at the front and rear thereof. The side wall of the basin is provided adjacent its upper margin with one or more openings to permit liquid from the basin to overflow into the toilet bowl, and also with an enlarged opening dimensioned and arranged for the purpose hereinafter set forth.

When the bowl thus constructed is positioned on the toilet bowl, with the afore-mentioned elongated opening facing the front of the toilet bowl, a patient occupying a sitting position over the basin will be enabled to have at hand means for selectively flowing water into the basin or for diverting it directly into the toilet bowl during the soaking period in which the perineal regions are immersed in the basin. To that end, with the basin of proper dimensions, the outlet of a flexible hose connected with a relatively remote water faucet of a lavatory or other bathroom fixture may be extended down through the space between the upper edge of the basin and the inner periphery of the toilet bowl, and inserted through the aforementioned elongated opening so that water from the faucet will flow directly into the basin, or the outer end of the hose may be withdrawn from the opening and pointed downwardly in said space so that the flow of water from the faucet may be diverted directly into the toilet bowl.

Thus, the temperature of the water in the basin may be adjusted from time to time, according to the patient's needs, during the period in which the patient is in the sitting position occupied during the immersion and soaking of the perineal regions of the body in the water contained in the basin. Also, by providing for the entry of the water into the basin at a point adjacent its bottom, the patient is enabled, by continuing the flow of water into the basin while seated thereon, to gain the soothing and other beneficial effects of having the perineal areas immersed in water that is in a state of motion, as compared to a quiescent body of water.

As indicated, the flexible hose may be connected to a water faucet of a lavatory at a more or less remote distance from the toilet bowl. In order to comply with the sanitary codes in effect in many communities with respect to the connection of plumbing fixtures to the water supply system, a suitable antisiphoning device may be interposed between the faucet and the inlet end of the flexible hose, to insure against back siphonage of water from the sitz bath to the water supply system.

These and other objects and advantages of the invention will be more readily understood from the detailed description given herebelow, and from the accompanying drawings.

In the drawings:

Fig. 1 is a view, in perspective, of a conventional toilet bowl, having the sitz bath embodying the present invention disposed in operative position thereon, and illustrating means for connecting the same with a faucet of a lavatory or other bathroom fixture;

Fig. 2 is a view in cross-section, partly broken away, taken along lines 2-2 of Figure 1;

Fig. 3 is a plan view of the basin per se; and

Fig. 4 is a view similar to Fig. 2, illustrating a modified form of the basin.

Referring now in more detail to the drawings, numeral 10 designates a conventional toilet bowl having an upper portion 11 with an inwardly extending rim 12 having its uppermost surface 13 disposed in a substantially horizontal plane, though usually rounded off at the edges thereof as shown. The conventional seat for the toilet bowl, usually hinged adjacent the rear end of the toilet bowl, is not illustrated in the drawing. The sitz bath of the invention is preferably designed to be supported in its operative position on the uppermost surface of the bowl, with the seat in fully raised position away from the bowl. However, the sitz bath may be configured and dimensioned so as to be selectively supported either on the seat or on the rim of the bowl.

The sitz bath proper, indicated generally by numeral 20, comprises a basin having a flange or rim 22, at its upper margin. The basin may be made of stainless steel, aluminum, or other suitable metal, or of molded synthetic plastic resin of suitable type, porcelain or enamel ware, or, in certain instances, of molded fibrous material.

The basin may be either of perfectly round or of oval shape in its horizontal configuration so as to be usable with the conventional oval-shaped toilet bowls. If the basin is formed in a round shape, it should have an outside diameter at its flange, substantially in excess of the minor axis of conventional toilet bowls, but sufficiently less than the major axis of such conventional toilet bowls so that while enabling the basin to be supported in position, by marginal flange 22, on the rim 12 of the bowl at opposite sides thereof, the basin will be spaced inwardly a substantial distance from the inner periphery of the rim of the bowl at the front (as well as at the rear) thereof. The spacing between the basin and the rim of the toilet bowl at the front end thereof is indicated by numeral 25. To the same end, if the basin is oval shape, the minor axis of the oval, measured at the marginal flange 22, will be somewhat greater than the minor axis of the conventional oval-shaped toilet bowls, whereas the major axis of the oval-shaped basin will be substantially less than the major axis of the conventional toilet bowls.

An opening or openings 30 are formed in the wall of the basin adjacent the upper margin thereof, desirably at diametrically opposite locations. These openings may be of any desired shape and size, to provide for overflow of water from the basin into the toilet bowl at a rate consonant with the rate at which water may be flowed into the basin by the patient.

In the specific form illustrated in the drawing, four of such openings are illustrated at each of diametrically opposite locations.

Also formed in the wall of the basin, adjacent its upper margin, is an elongated opening 33, dimensioned to permit ready insertion, withdrawal, and free sliding or rocking movement of the outlet end portion of a flexible hose 38 whose opposite end is attached to a faucet 40 of a lavatory or other bathroom fixture.

As best illustrated in Fig. 2, the outlet end portion of the hose 36, or of a fitting connected thereto, may be extended down through the space 25 and inserted through the elongated opening 33 so that the discharge opening 42 of the hose or fitting may be disposed as close to the bottom 44 of the basin as desired. Thus, with the basin positioned as shown, i.e., with the opening 33 facing the front of the bowl, a patient seated on the basin with legs spread slightly apart, will have the hose disposed between the thighs and close at hand for readily moving the outlet end portion of the hose, either to insert or withdraw it from the opening 33, or to slide or rock it therein.

Assuming that water of the desired temperature is flowing from the faucet 40 into the flexible hose positioned as

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shown in full lines in Fig. 2, water will flow into the basin. When the water level in the basin reaches the opening or openings 30, it will overflow from these openings into the toilet bowl. Should the patient desire the flow of water into the basin to continue during the time the patient is soaking the perineal regions, the discharge end of the hose may be held within the basin in the position shown in Fig. 2, or it may be slid from side to side or swung upward or downward, as permitted by the opening 33. On the other hand, should the patient, while sitting with the perineal regions submerged in the bath, desire to discontinue the flow of water into the basin, it may be diverted or by-passed directly into the toilet bowl merely by withdrawing the outlet end portion of the hose through the opening 33 and positioning it so that it extends downwardly in space 25 with its discharge opening 42 pointed into the bowl as illustrated, for example, in dotted lines in Fig. 2.

As will be observed, when the outlet end of the hose is disposed on the interior of the basin, with its discharge opening 42 adjacent the bottom thereof, rapid mixing of incoming water with the water already in the basin is facilitated, direct impingement of a stream of the incoming water upon the buttocks of the patient is avoided, and the body of water in the basin may be kept in a state of motion. At the same time, splashing of any water over the top of the basin and on to the clothing of the patient is avoided.

At the conclusion of the desired period of soaking of the perineal regions in the sitz bath, the patient may arise from the sitting position occupied during the soaking period, turn off the flow of water at faucet 40, remove the hose from the basin, and pour the contents of the basin into the toilet bowl.

Reference has been hereinabove made to the sanitary codes in many communities with regard to connecting plumbing fixtures to the water supply system. It is another advantage of the present invention that in compliance with such codes, anti-siphoning devices may readily be interposed between the faucet and the inlet end of the flexible hose 38. One such device is illustrated in the companion joint application of the present applicant and Stanley H. Saulson, filed concurrently with the instant application. Manifestly, other suitable forms of anti-siphoning devices may be similarly employed in connection with the sitz bath of the present invention.

Fig. 4 illustrates an embodiment of the invention wherein the basin 20 is provided in the bottom wall 44 thereof with a drain opening 51 which may be closed by a suitable plug 52, to which a chain or the like 53 may be

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connected. The upper or free end of the chain may be led either through one of the openings 30 or through a separate guide slot or the like formed on the basin so as to extend over the rim of the toilet bowl for grasping by the patient while in seated position over the basin, to permit direct draining of the contents of the basin into the toilet bowl.

What is claimed is:

1. A sitz bath for the purposes set forth, comprising a basin formed at its upper perimeter with an outwardly extending flange, said basin being dimensioned at its upper margin to permit the flange to support the basin in depending position interiorly of a conventional oval-shaped toilet bowl while leaving the basin spaced from the inner periphery of the rim of such toilet bowl at the forward end of the latter, said basin having in the wall thereof, adjacent said upper margin, an overflow opening and an elongated opening, said last-named opening being disposed at said forward end when the basin is positioned as aforesaid on a toilet bowl, and being larger than the overflow opening whereby one end of a flexible hose in said space between the basin and the inner periphery of the rim of the toilet bowl may be inserted into and withdrawn from the interior of the basin through said elongated opening.

2. A sitz bath as defined in claim 1, wherein said basin is of circular shape.

3. A sitz bath as defined in claim 1, wherein said basin is oval-shaped and the elongated opening is substantially in alignment with the major axis of the oval.

4. A sitz bath as defined in claim 1, wherein said basin has a drain opening in the bottom wall thereof, said drain opening having a removable closure plug, said plug having one end of a flexible member connected thereto for removing the same from said drain opening, and means formed below the upper margin of the basin to receive the opposite end of said flexible member.

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