United States Patent [19]

Pratt

[11] **3,902,200**

[45] **Sept. 2, 1975**

[54] **SITZ BATH**

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[22] Filed: **Aug. 19, 1974**

[21] Appl. No.: **498,475**

[52] **U.S. Cl.** ..... **4/6;** 4/185 R; 4/185 B

[51] **Int. Cl.**[2] **A47K 3/22;** A47K 11/08

[58] **Field of Search** ..... 4/6, 7, 185 R, 187, 185 B, 4/1

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[57] **ABSTRACT**

A sitz bath is provided which can be used in a home bathtub by even feeble patients. The bath includes a chair member having a dish-shaped seat, and an inner wall extending downwardly from the seat. An outer wall spaced from the inner wall extends everywhere above the patient's abdomen to define a fluid reservoir. The outer wall rear supports mid-portions of the patient's back, while outer wall sides provide arm rest supports. An outer wall front lip supports portions of the patient's legs.

9 Claims, 6 Drawing Figures

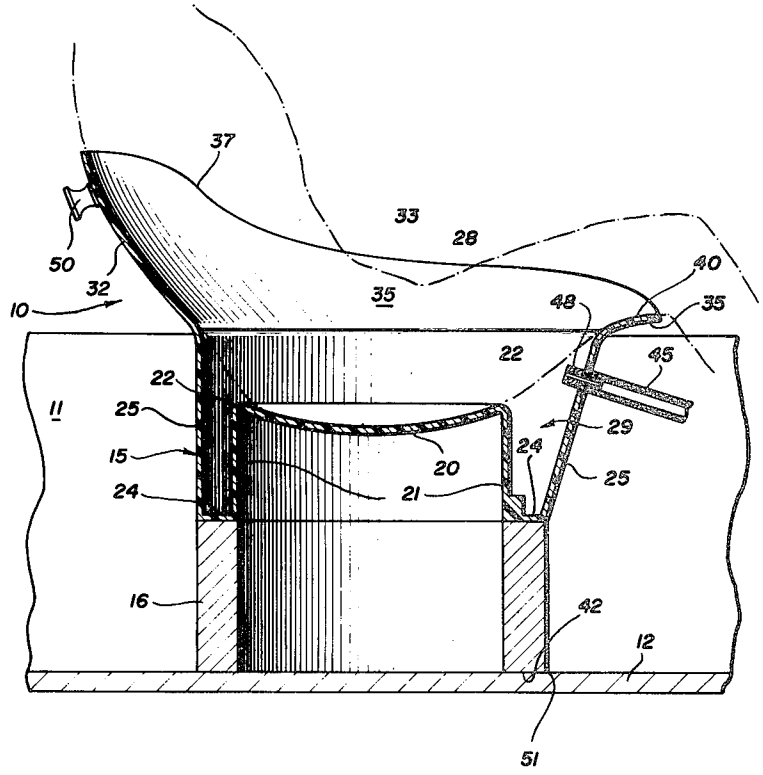


FIG. 1

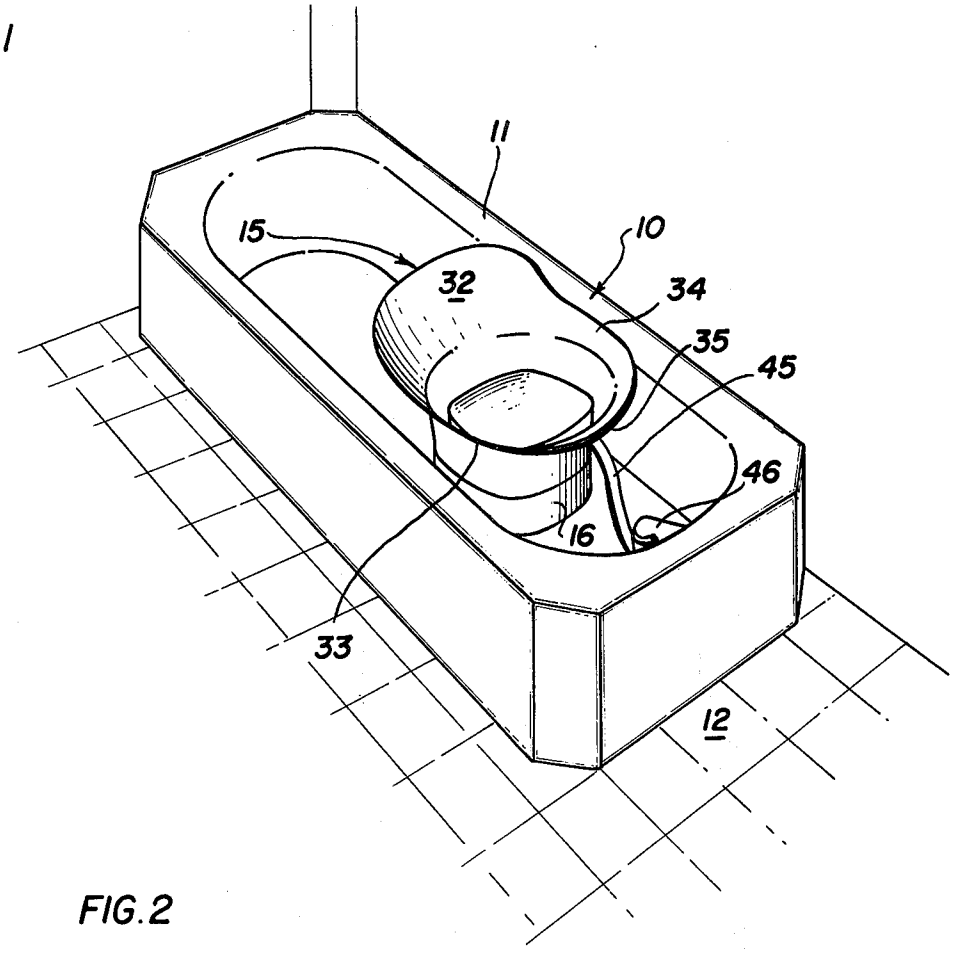


FIG. 2

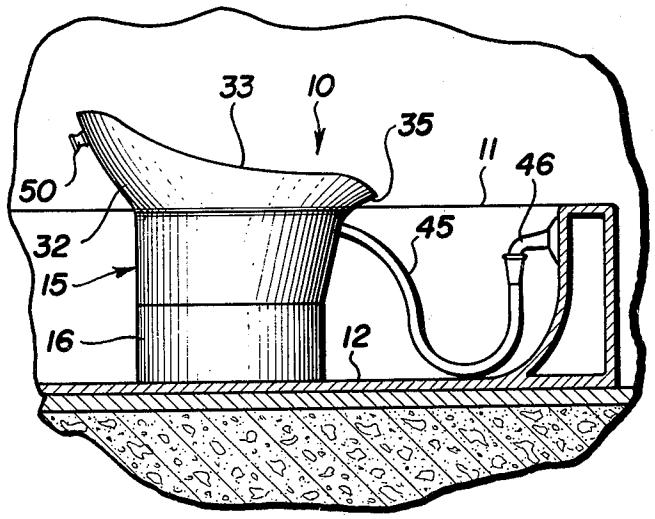


FIG. 3

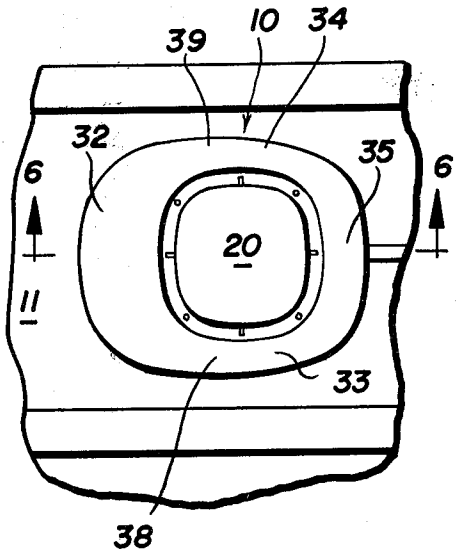


FIG. 4

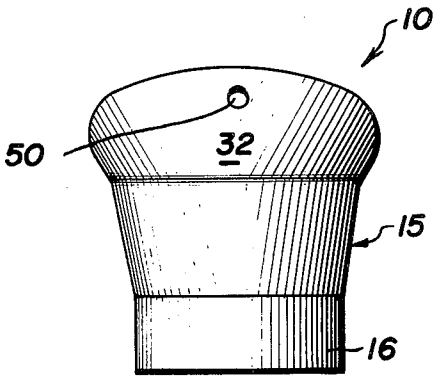


FIG. 5

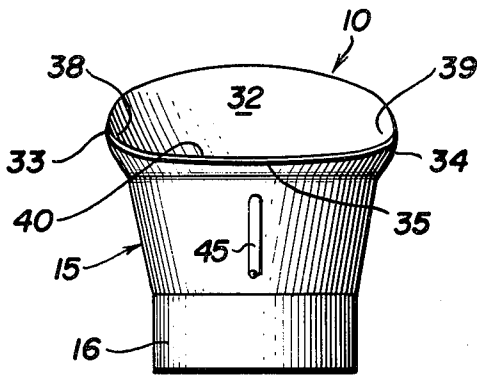
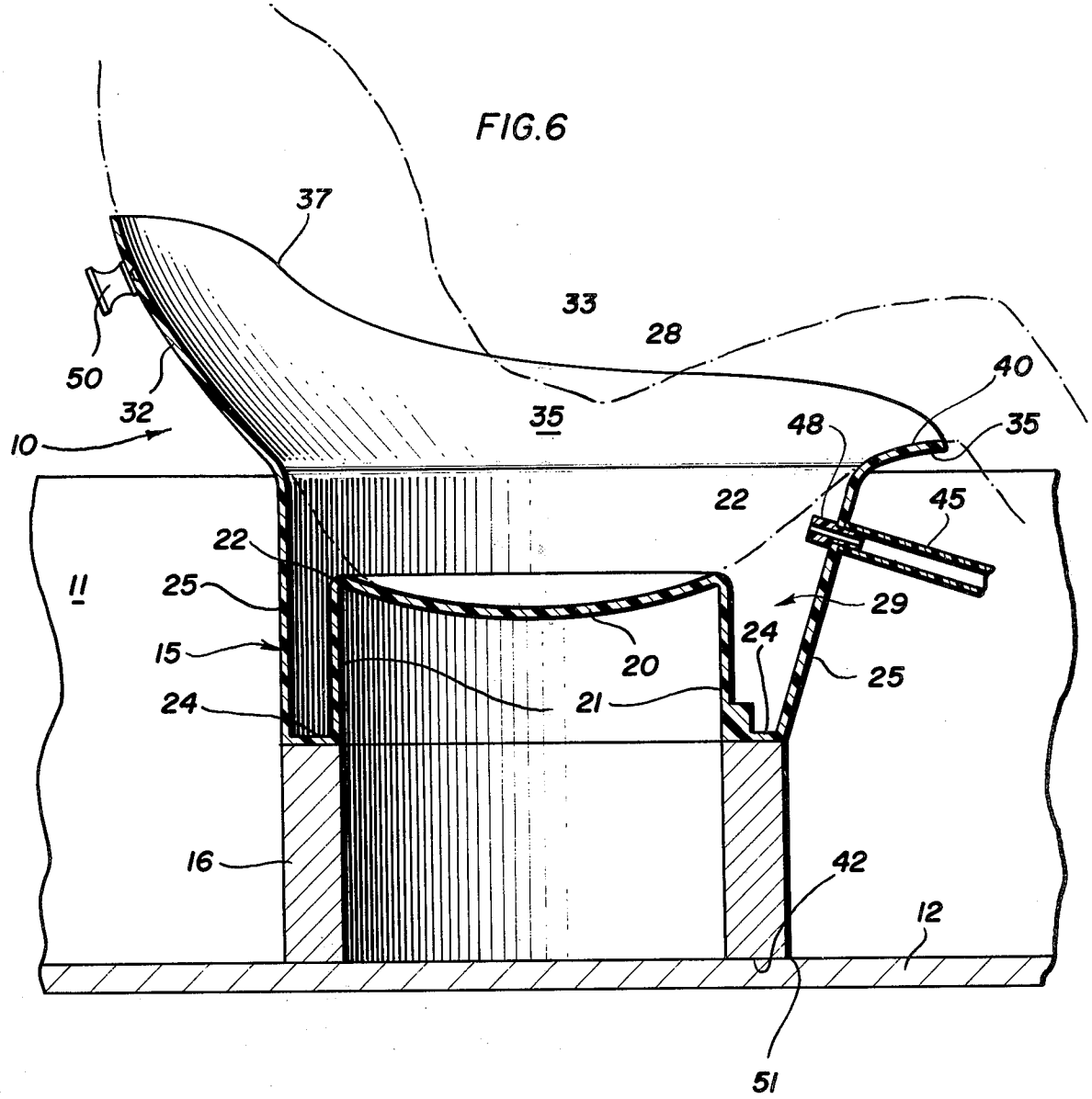


FIG. 6



SITZ BATH

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates generally to sitz baths, and more particularly concerns an inexpensive, light weight, easy-to-use sitz bath construction which applies a semi-circulating fluid to a patient's lower abdomen.

It is the principle object of the present invention to provide an inexpensive sitz bath which can be easily used by a wide variety of patients.

It is a more specific object of the invention to provide a sitz bath which can be quickly and easily placed in a home bathtub or like location by any user patient, and which can be quickly and easily dumped of fluid and removed from the bathtub after use.

Another object is to provide a sitz bath which can be used by a patient in the comfort and privacy of his own home bathroom.

Yet another object of the invention is to provide a sitz bath which discourages fluid spills and housekeeping accidents before, during and after use.

Still another object of the invention is to provide a sitz bath which is light in weight.

A further object is to provide a sitz bath wherein the temperature of the bath fluid can be easily and quickly controlled.

A still further object of the invention is to provide a sitz bath having the patient comfort of a chair while requiring less water or other fluid for operation than a normal bathtub.

An additional object of the invention is to provide a sitz bath which can be easily entered, used and exited by even crippled, frail or feeble patients.

Another object is to provide a sitz bath which encourages the patient to assume a relaxed, semi-reclining position while using the bath.

A further object of the invention is to provide a sitz bath which is easy and inexpensive to manufacture, yet which is of rugged, trouble-free construction.

Other objects and advantages of the invention will become apparent upon reading the following detailed description and upon reference to the drawings. Throughout the description, like reference numerals refer to like parts.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. **1** is a perspective view showing the novel sitz bath as it appears when placed in a home bathtub or similar location for use;

FIG. **2** is a side elevational view of the bathtub interior and the novel sitz bath;

FIG. **3** is a top plan view of the sitz bath as it appears when placed in the bathtub;

FIG. **4** is a rear elevational view of the novel sitz bath;

FIG. **5** is a front elevational view of the novel sitz bath; and

FIG. **6** is a sectional view taken substantially in the plane of line **6—6** in FIG. **3** and showing in further detail the construction of the novel sitz bath.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

While the invention will be described in connection with a preferred embodiment, it will be understood that it is not intended to limit the invention to this embodiment. On the contrary, it is intended to cover all alternatives, modifications and equivalents as may be included within the spirit and scope of the invention.

Turning first to FIG. **1**, there is shown a sitz bath **10** comprising the present invention as it appears when placed for use within a home bathtub **11** upon an ordinary bathtub floor **12** or like support. In general, the novel sitz bath **10** can be considered to comprise a chair portion **15** and supportive pedestal member **16**. In accordance with one aspect of the invention, the chair **15** can be formed of a convenient polyolefin or other plastic material; by using such material, the novel sitz bath can be easily and quickly formed at low cost in the desired and claimed shape.

As illustrated in FIGS. **3** and **6**, the chair portion **15** includes a smooth, dish-shaped seat **20** adapted to support a patient's weight. By forming the chair in the illustrated smooth dish shape, patient discomfort is minimized and frequent sitz bath use is encouraged. Moreover, it is a feature of the invention that elimination of fluid inflow nozzles or outflow drains which are directly connected to the seat **20** itself maximizes patient comfort and encourages sitz bath use by even sensitive patients.

In accordance with another aspect of the invention, a fluid reservoir is provided in the novel sitz bath. To form this reservoir, a continuous inner wall **21** defines an edge **22** of the seat **20** and smoothly extends downwardly away from the seat edge **22**, as illustrated particularly in FIG. **6**. At the lower extremity of the illustrated wall **21**, an irregular annular bottom portion **24** is provided, and it extends generally horizontally away from the inner wall **21**. At a position spaced apart from the inner wall **21** is a continuous outer wall **25** which projects upwardly from the annular bottom **24**, as may be envisioned from FIG. **6**. Since this outer wall **25** extends everywhere above the lower portions of the patient's abdomen when the patient sits on the seat **20**, as illustrated in FIG. **6**, a fluid reservoir **28** is provided which permits immersion of the patient's lower abdomen. Further, a fluid subreservoir **29** of irregular annular shape is provided around and below the edge **22** of the chair seat **20**. This fluid subreservoir **29** provides a supply of heated water or other medicinal fluid immediately adjacent those parts of the patient's anatomy which are to be treated by sitz bath use. Hot water located in the upper portions of the reservoir **28** is thus prevented from rapidly cooling; if other medicinal fluid is used in the bath, fluid dilution can be easily and quickly overcome by gentle fluid agitation.

The chair outer wall **25** rises smoothly and continuously above the reservoir **28** and seat **20** to define a chair rear **32**, two chair sides **33** and **34** and a chair front **35**. The chair outer wall rear portion rises or extends upwardly a sufficient distance and is curved to support the patient's middle back region, as illustrated in FIG. **6**.

From the rear portion, an outer wall top edge **37** slopes gradually downwardly to the two side portions **33** and **34**. The outer wall material forming the side portions **33** and **34** extends upwardly from the general area of the reservoir **28** and is folded smoothly outwardly to define patient arm rest areas **38** and **39**, and shown in FIGS. **3** and **5**. As can be envisioned, these arm rests **38** and **39** are spaced apart from adjacent portions of the chair and from the patient's anatomy to provide comfortable patient arm rest support.

In accordance with a further aspect of the invention, the chair outer wall front portion **35** rises and turns smoothly outwardly away from the bath seat **20** and re-

maining portions of the chair **15** to provide a lip **40.** This lip **40** is formed and oriented to provide support for portions of the patient's legs, as particularly illustrated in FIG. **6.** Moreover, the lip **40** is located at an elevation lower than the arm rests **38** and **39** and the chair back or rear **32** to provide an egress for fluid flushing away from the top of the reservoir **28.**

As noted above, it is an important aspect of the invention that patients using the sitz bath are encouraged to assume a relaxed, semi-reclining position. To this end, the outer wall back chair rear **32,** sides **33** and **34** and front **35** are angled to the bath chair seat **20** so as to encourage the patient to assume a semi-reclining position when using the bath, as illustrated in FIG. **6.**

In the illustrated embodiment, the various sitz bath chair parts are formed so as to flow smoothly and continuously into one another, thereby making easy the manufacture, by molding or other manufacturing process, of the chair member. Sitz bath cleaning or other chair maintenance is also made easy.

In accordance with yet another aspect of the invention, the chair **15** is located at a height above the bathtub floor **12** which comfortably encourages the patient to assume a semi-reclining position and which provides relatively easy patient entrance into and exit from the sitz bath. To inexpensively accomplish this, the pedestal member **16** is provided. In the illustrated embodiment, this pedestal member **16** takes the form of an irregular annulus, which abuttively supports the chair by convenient attachment to the chair member annular bottom **24.** When so constructed, the sitz bath continuous, smooth outer surface is maintained. The annular pedestal member **16** can be formed of wood or other convenient material, and is provided with a bottom **42** adapted to rest solidly upon the bathtub floor **12.**

It is another feature of the invention that a fluid such as warm water can be quickly and easily introduced to the novel sitz bath **10** in precisely controlled amounts at a precisely controlled temperature. To this end, a flexible hose **45** formed of any convenient material extends from the chair member **15** to a remote fluid supply source such as a bathtub faucet **46,** as illustrated particularly in FIGS. **1** and **2.** By simply adjusting the familiar hot and cold water faucets, the sitz bath user can easily control both the volume of water being circulated through the sitz bath, and the water temperature. It is contemplated that the hose **45** could also be connected to a remote fluid supply source to introduce other medicinal fluids to the chair if desired.

As illustrated particularly in FIG. **6,** the flexible hose **45** is attached to the sitz bath by a fluid inlet **48.** To direct the fresh fluid directly at a portion of the patient's lower abdomen when the patient assumes the encouraged semi-reclining position, the inlet **48** is located below the outwardly turned lip portion **40** and above the chair annular bottom **24.**

In accordance with another aspect of the invention, the chair can be rotatably dumped to decant or pour out the fluid from the reservoir **28** after chair use has been completed. Here, a handle member **50** is affixed to the chair **15** at a point adjacent the top edge **37** of the chair outer wall **32.** In this position, the handle affords maximum leverage relative to the lower front extremity **51** of the bath **10,** and provides relatively easy rotational dumping motion of the sitz bath **10.** When so dumped, the fluid is quickly poured out of the reservoir **28.** Thereafter, the sitz bath **10** can be easily removed from the bathtub **11** even by feeble patients. If desired, fluid exhaust means such as small holes or ports (not shown) can be formed in the chair outer wall rear **32** at an elevation above the seat **20** to encourage a continuous flow of fluid through the chair **15** and around the patient's lower abdomen.

The invention is claimed as follows:

1. A sitz bath comprising a polyolefin chair, the chair including a smooth, dish-shaped seat adapted to support a patient's weight, a continuous inner wall defining the edge of the seat and smoothly extending downwardly away from the seat edge, an irregular annular bottom defining the lower extremity of the inner wall, a continuous outer wall spaced apart from the inner wall, projecting upwardly from the annular bottom to a level above the seat and defining a chair front, two sides and a rear, the outer wall extending everywhere above the lower portions of the patient's abdomen when the patient sits on the seat to define a fluid reservoir which permits immersion of the patient's lower abdomen and which provides a fluid subreservoir of irregular annular shape around and below the chair seat, the outer wall rear smoothly extending further upwardly to define support for at least the patient's middle back region, the outer wall sides smoothly extending further upwardly to define patient arm rests at positions spaced apart from the patient's abdomen, and the outer wall front turning smoothly outwardly away from the bath seat to provide a lip for supporting portions of the patient's legs, the outer wall, rear sides and front being angled to the bath chair seat to encourage the patient to assume a semi-reclining position when using the bath.

2. A sitz bath according to claim **1** including flexible hose means adapted for connection to a remote fluid supply source, and fluid inlet means disposed in the chair front outer wall below the front outer wall outwardly turned lip portions and above the chair annular bottom, the inlet means being oriented to direct a flow of fresh fluid directly at a portion of the patient's lower abdomen when the patient assumes said semi-reclining position when using the bath.

3. A sitz bath according to claim **1** including a pedestal member adapted to rest on the floor of a bathtub, and to supportively locate the chair seat at a height above the bathtub floor which comfortably encourages the patient to assume a semi-reclining position when using the bath and which provides relatively easy patient entrance into and exit from the sitz bath.

4. A sitz bath according to claim **3** wherein said pedestal member is a continuous irregular annulus formed to abuttively support said chair irregular annular bottom.

5. A sitz bath according to claim **1** including handle means affixed to the chair adjacent the top extremity of the chair outer wall rear at a position to afford maximum leverage relative to the lower front extremity of the bath to provide relatively easy rotational decantal dumping of fluid from the chair and removal of the sitz bath from the bathtub.

6. A sitz bath according to claim **1** including fluid exhaust means formed in the chair rear outer wall at an elevation above the seat to encourage a continuous flow of fluid through the chair and around the patient's lower abdomen.

7. A sitz bath comprising a polyolefin chair, the chair including a seat adapted to support a patient's weight,

an inner wall defining the edge of the seat and extending downwardly away from the seat edge to an irregular annular bottom, an outer wall projecting upwardly from the annular bottom above the seat and defining a chair front, two sides and a rear, the outer wall extending everywhere above the lower portions of the patient's abdomen when the patient sits on the chair seat to provide a fluid reservior which permits immersion of the patient's lower abdomen and which provides a fluid subreservoir below the bath seat the outer wall rear smoothly extending further upwardly to define support for at least the patient's middle back region, the outer wall sides smoothly extending further upwardly and outwardly to define patient arm rests and the outer wall front turning smoothly outwardly away from the bath seat at a position lower than the chair arm rests to provide a lip for supporting portions of the patient's legs and to provide a fluid egress lip, the outer wall rear, sides and front being angled to the bath chair seat to encourage the patient to assume a semi-reclining position when using the bath.

8. A sitz bath according to claim **7** including flexible hose means adapted for connection to a remote fluid supply source, and fluid inlet means disposed on the chair front outer wall below the front wall outwardly turned portions and above the chair bottom, the inlet means being oriented to direct a flow of fresh fluid directly at a portion of the patient's lower abdomen when the patient assumes said semi-reclining position when using the bath.

9. A sitz bath according to claim **7** including a pedestal member adapted to rest on the floor of a bathtub, and to supportively locate the chair seat at a height above the bathtub floor which comfortably encourages the patient to assume a semi-reclining position when using the bath and which provides relatively easy patient entrance into and exit from the sitz bath.

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