

Consumer Factsheet

Bidet douche seats, flexible hoses and bidets

PEER
REVIEWED

The purpose of this factsheet is to inform consumers about the function of bidet douche seats, flexible hoses and bidets and about the hazards associated to non-compliant installations of these fittings in their bathrooms.

What are bidet douche seats, flexible hoses and bidets

Bidet douche seats, flexible hoses and bidets are fittings installed in bathrooms and are intended for personal hygiene purposes. Even though bidets have been used for many years, mainly in Asia and Europe, they have become popular during the last few years amongst older people and people with disability in Australia, as they facilitate personal hygiene and increase independence.

Bidet douche seats



Figure 1. A bidet douche seat

Bidet douche seats (or toilet bidet seats) are fixtures used in conjunction with commercially available WC pans, fitting on the toilet rim or replacing the toilet seat and cover. Some models can provide additional functions, such as heated seats, warm water, warm air dryer, deodorizer, etc.

Flexible hoses



Flexible hoses can be installed close to toilet pans so that people can use them for personal hygiene or for toilet cleaning purposes.

Figure 2. Flexible hose next to a toilet

Standalone bidet



A bidet is a standalone fixture installed in bathrooms. Bidets have taps and/or nozzles over the rim and can be filled with water just like a sink.

Figure 3. A standalone bidet

Who can benefit from using bidets and flexible hoses

Douche seats, flexible hoses and bidets can help everyone have more effective personal hygiene but they can specifically assist people with medical conditions or disabilities take care of themselves and be more independent. Some of the types of conditions that can benefit from these fittings are people with physical disabilities and especially disabilities that limit peoples' range of motion, people with functional gastrointestinal disorders or structural gastrointestinal disorders, people with developmental disabilities, cognitive impairments, etc.

Why non-compliant installations of bidet douche seats or flexible hoses present health risks

Inappropriate installation of bidet douche seats or flexible hoses can present health hazards by allowing contaminated water getting back into the main (drinking) water supply. This can happen when:

- the bidet douche outlet is less than 25mm above the overflow level of the pan;
- the flexible hose outlet can reach below the overflow level of the toilet pan.

In both cases, if a water pressure change happens (for example, when other users of the household open a tap) when the fixture is in use, contaminated water from the toilet could be siphoned back to the water supply. This could impose the users of the property as well as of neighbouring properties to serious health risks.

As the water outlet of all standalone bidets is greater than 25mm above the overflow level of the fitting, bidets do not present the above backflow and the associated health hazards.

Installation requirements

The danger of cross contamination of the water supply from inappropriate installations of bidet douche seats or flexible hoses needs to be removed by installing a “high-hazard” backflow protection device. The backflow prevention devices, as well as the bidet douche seats and the flexible hoses should always be installed by a licensed plumbing contractor. The contractor will test the backflow prevention device after installation and prior to service and perform a 12-month test and maintenance to ensure operational function. Backflow prevention devices shall be installed in accordance with AS/NZS 3500.1:2018.

Another way to avoid backflow from the bidet douche seat outlet being too close to the toilet pan, is the use of a “toilet seat spacer”. Spacers need to be at least 80mm high and act as a buffer between the nozzle and the toilet pan. Petite people should try a toilet with a spacer before purchase, as their feet might not reach the ground. Spacers are available from all bidet outlets, as well as assistive technology supply companies, who act as distributors of the item.

Standalone bidets do not require testable backflow devices.

What should I do if I want to install a bidet douche seat, a bidet or a flexible hose?

If you are thinking about installing a standalone bidet, a bidet douche seat or a flexible hose, you need to get advice from a professional plumber, as different states have different interpretative guidelines under their own legislations that might have an impact on the way the system needs to be installed.

If you already have a bidet douche seat or a flexible hose in your bathroom and you don't know whether they are correctly installed, you should consider asking a professional plumber to check the installation for you.

Where can I find more information?

- Licensed plumbers
- Home Modification and Maintenance service providers
- Australian Standards:
AS 3500.1:2018 Plumbing and drainage - Water services,
AS 2845.1:2010 Water supply - Backflow prevention devices - Materials, design and performance requirements and
AS 2845.2:2010 Water supply - Backflow preventions devices - Registered air gaps and registered break tanks
- WaterMark Technical Specification 051:2016 (WMTS – 051:2016)
- Government of Western Australia, Dept. of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety. Plumbers Licensing Board (2019). Technical Note: Flexible spray hoses, Version 2.
- Office of the Technical Regulator. Government of South Australia (2016). Plumbing Advisory Note: Backflow prevention requirements for toilet seat douche outlets and flexible hoses.
- South East Water (2017). Backflow Prevention Containment Policy.
- Other home modification resources on the HMinfo website: www.homemods.info

***This information was correct at time of printing.*