GUIDANCE FOR OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS AND OTHER HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

A Guide to Toilet Seats.

Factors to consider when assessing a client's needs.





When assessing clients who are unable to toilet independently or who have difficulty in cleaning themselves after toileting, a Wash and Dry Toilet is often specified to ensure that the client can achieve an appropriate level of hygiene.

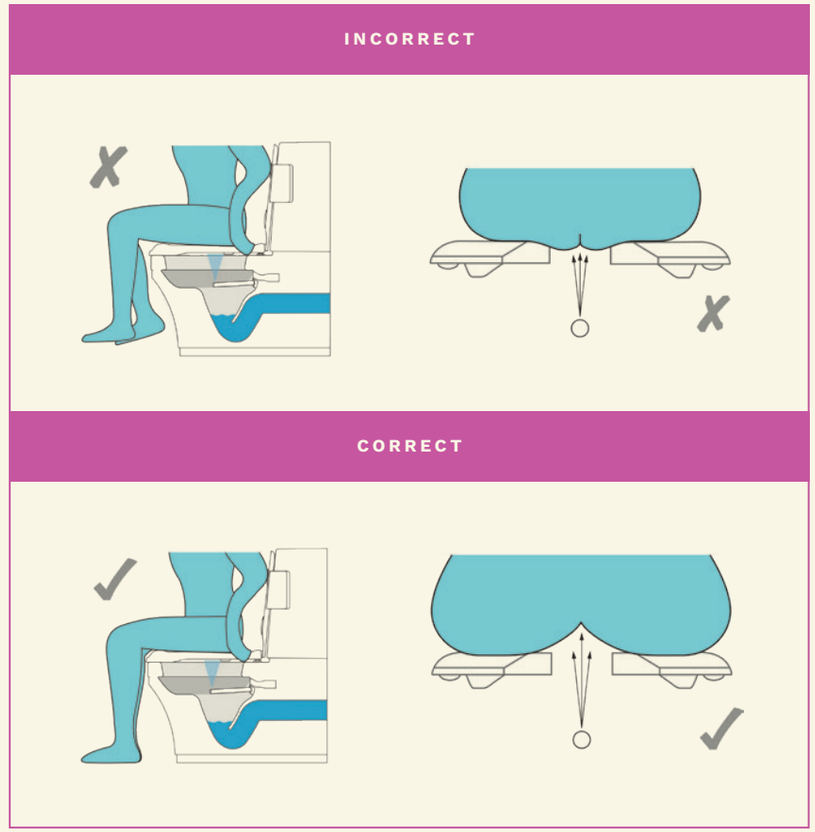
One of the key considerations as part of the assessment is to ensure that the correct seat is specified to best suit the client's physiological needs. The seat is a critical interface between the client and the clinical function of the toilet. An incorrectly specified seat may diminish the effectiveness of the toilet's wash and dry functions and it may also be uncomfortable or even unsafe for the client.

We've created this Guide to demonstrate the importance of selecting a seat appropriate to the needs of the client, we'll take a look at the types of seats available, and we'll end by covering the key assessment considerations.

1. How important is the correct choice of toilet seat?

The short answer is that it is one of the most important considerations after the wash and dry function itself. It ensures that the client is both comfortable, seated safely, and correctly positioned over the douche arm.

- **Anatomical Access:** The seat must facilitate the “parting” of the gluteal muscles. If a client with a larger body mass sits on a standard seat that is too narrow, the buttocks may be pressed together, preventing the water stream from reaching the anus.
- **Stability and Tone:** A client with high muscle tone or poor trunk control needs a seat that provides a stable base. If they are slipping or fighting to stay upright, their pelvic position shifts, and the wash stream may miss the target area.
- **Tissue Viability:** Clients who spend extended periods on the toilet (e.g., during bowel management routines) are at high risk of pressure ulcers. A standard hard seat can cause rapid skin breakdown.



2. The clinical view.

In Occupational Therapy practice, the consensus is that the seat must be prescribed based on functional anthropometrics (the client's body shape and size) rather than aesthetics.

- **Infection Control:** A key clinical goal is eliminating "residual soiling." If the seat does not allow the wash to penetrate effectively, faecal matter remains, leading to UTIs and skin excoriation.
- **Safety Standards:** For bariatric users, standard domestic seats are viewed as a significant fall risk. A seat rating must match the client's weight plus the dynamic force of transfer.
- **Pelvic Positioning:** The "Gold Standard" position is hips, knees, and ankles at 90 degrees. The seat aperture must allow the ischial tuberosities (sitting bones) to be supported while the gluteal shelf is opened for cleaning.



3. Types of seats available.



When specifying the Closomat Palma Vita, you have access to a range of specialist seats. Each serves a specific clinical function.

SEAT TYPE	CLINICAL INDICATION	KEY BENEFIT
Standard Seat	Ambulant users with good trunk control and standard BMI.	Familiar feel; durable hard plastic for easy cleaning.
Soft Seat	Clients with thin skin, low body mass (bony prominences), or existing pressure sores.	Reduces pressure on the ischial tuberosities; provides warmth which can aid bowel relaxation.
Open-Fronted (Horseshoe)	Male clients (provides room for genitalia) or clients requiring anterior hygiene access.	Allows the client to reach in for intermittent self-catheterisation or manual stimulation without standing up.
Bariatric (e.g., Big John)	Clients with a BMI > 35 or wide pelvic width.	19-inch width provides a larger surface area, preventing the “pinch” effect where buttocks are forced together, ensuring the wash reaches the anus.
Pediatric/ Small Aperture	Children or small adults who risk “falling through” a standard aperture.	Reduces anxiety; ensures the client is not holding themselves up by tension, allowing the bowel to relax.

4. Assessment considerations.

We've created this checklist to assist in the assessment of a client for a Wash and Dry Toilet.

A The "Gluteal Spread"

Observe (or simulate) the client's seated position. Does their current seat cause their buttocks to press together?

- **Action:** If yes, specify a Bariatric seat to mechanically separate the cheeks and ensure the douche stream can penetrate.

B Transfer Method

How does the client get on the toilet?

- **Side Transfer:** A seat with lateral stability is essential. Ensure the seat buffers (underneath) are robust enough to stop the seat shearing sideways during a slide-board transfer.
- **Hoist:** Ensure the seat aperture aligns with the sling positioning so the client lands correctly over the douche arm.

C Pelvic Tilt and Posture

Does the client have a posterior pelvic tilt (slumping)?

- **Action:** This posture often directs the stream onto the coccyx rather than the anus. You may need a Soft Seat to encourage a more upright posture or a Single Extended Douche arm to reach further forward.

D Shower Chair Compatibility

Will the client eventually need a shower chair?

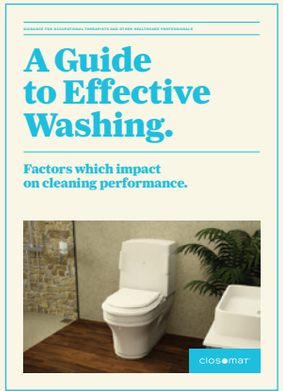
- **Action:** Check if the toilet bowl and seat configuration allows a shower chair (like the Prism T40 AUTO) to reverse over the toilet.

E Tissue Viability Risk

- **Action:** If the client scores medium/high on a Waterlow assessment, a Soft Seat is not a luxury; it is a clinical necessity to prevent pressure injuries during the wash cycle.

In this Guide we have demonstrated how the correct choice of toilet seat is a fundamental component in specifying a Wash and Dry Toilet. By considering the client's needs against the available range of seats, Occupational Therapists can ensure the Closomat Palma Vita delivers the safest, most comfortable, and clinically effective level of hygiene for their clients.

To find out more, and to look at the other Guides we have created, please visit closomat.co.uk or call us on 0800 374 076.



This is one of a series of Guides we have developed to support Occupational Therapists. If you would like more information about how a Closomat Wash and Dry Toilet provides what we believe is the best clean available on the market, take a look at:

A Guide to Effective Washing: factors which impact on cleaning performance.

Contact us if you want to find out more.

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