

Paperless toilets offer independence—at a price

by Greta M. Herron and Marcella Durand

Once you shut the bathroom door, what happens next? With MS, it can be difficult or impossible to grip toilet paper and maneuver properly using a conventional toilet. “Paperless” or “hands-free” toilets may offer precious independence.

Bidets are low-mounted, sink-like washing basins used for centuries in Europe. Paperless toilets are a combination of bidet and toilet, and most fit onto existing toilets. Higher-end models use warm water jets and air dryers to cleanse and dry, while cost-conscious models use a simple stream of water. Heated seats, foot controls and adjustable water temperature and pressure are other add-ons that can increase both comfort—and cost.

Paperless toilets are just catching on in the United States. In Japan they're already standard for everyone, not just for people with disabilities. Over 70% of Japanese households have one. In a “green” future, they may become more popular in the U.S., as they conserve paper resources.

Starting the search

Following is a round-up of what's available in the U.S. **Abledata.com** is a good place to comparison shop for costs and features. Make sure to ask questions of



Retrofitting a toilet may solve a major personal need.

include a hand-held cleansing sprayer and have a five-year product warranty. Shipping is \$25. The

company does have a Web site, **bidet.com**, but prefers that customers order by phone at 877-981-1111.

Lubidet offers a no-electricity wash accessory, called the ILBB, that fits under most toilet seats. It is operated via a pushable flap that controls water pressure. It retails for \$50 plus \$9 for shipping. The Denver-based company also offers electric models that can be customized for left- or right-handed people, or operated with foot controls. The cost ranges from \$420 to \$480, plus \$25 shipping. Visit **lubidet.com** or call 800-582-4338.

whichever company you contact. Can a regular plumber fix the paperless toilet if it breaks or malfunctions? What is the company's return policy? And what happens if the electricity goes out?

American Bidet offers a range of options: Top-of-the-line “Deluxe Wash ‘n’ Dry” with hand- or foot-operated remote controls and warm air dryers costs \$995, while the “Capri” and “Bidet-O-Matic,” which are nonelectric attachments using warm or cold water, cost \$175. All products

The **Spaloo Classic** fits over an existing toilet. It provides variable water temperature and pressure, a heated seat and adjustable air dryer. It also comes in a Junior version that uses cold water and attaches between the toilet and existing seat. The Classic retails for \$399 and the Junior for \$75, plus \$20 shipping. Visit **Spaloo.com** or call 888-772-5662.

Greta M. Herron and Marcella Durand are on the staff of **Momentum**.

Who can help the helpers? Part 2

by Greta M. Herron

The spring 2009 issue of **Momentum** listed a number of caregiver organizations and the archive is online at nationalMSsociety.org/springmom. See page 65. There are more:

The “And Thou Shalt Honor” site (andthoushalthonor.org) was developed in connection with Bill Moyer’s PBS special on guardianship, long-distance caregiving and stress management. Caregivers can access interactive tools, expert videos, and worksheets.

Careflash (careflash.com) provides a free site on the Internet to share information about a loved one’s health circumstances. It allows people to donate time, meals or services, and has 3-D animations on dozens of health-related topics.

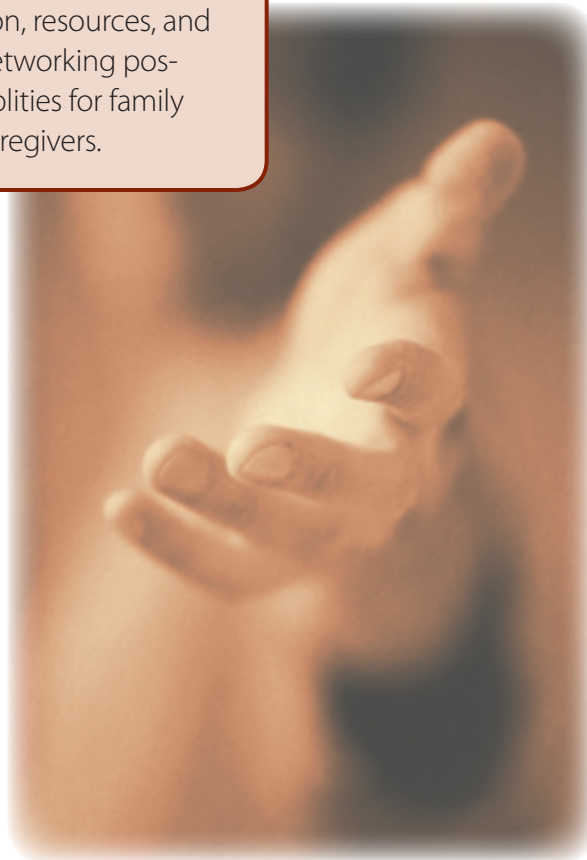
Caregivers Directory (caregiversdirectory.com) offers online articles on caregiving and support groups plus a newsletter with links to products, adult day care, home health, homemaker hospice, nursing and respite services, listed by state.

Care Trust Publications provides user-friendly caregiver training guides, journals, videos and books, including a Spanish guide for home care. Their newsletter is available in English, Russian, Cantonese, French, and Spanish.

Visit comfortofhome.com to order **The Comfort of Home: An Illustrated Step-by-Step Guide for MS Caregivers**. The text was developed with help from the National MS Society.

National Family Caregivers Association

More organizations that offer information, resources, and networking possibilities for family caregivers.



(thefamilycaregiver.org), started by a woman whose husband has MS, educates, supports, empowers and speaks up for the more than 50 million Americans who care for loved ones with a chronic illness, disability or the frailties of old age. NFCA reaches across the boundaries of diagnoses, relationships and life stages. Their quarterly newsletter, **Take Care!**, has tips on caregiving, finances and resources.

The National Organization for Empowering Caregivers (nofec.org) offers a variety of online forums, articles and links, a print and an online newsletter, expert columns and emotional and spiritual support through journaling, healing circle inspiration and humor.

Net of Care (netofcare.org) from the Beth Israel Medical Center’s Department of Pain Medicine and Palliative Care is a resource network, featuring online support, education and information as well as searchable local and national resource databases, telephone support groups and an e-newsletter.

For more information on caregiving, go to nationalMSsociety.org/brochures, and click on “Managing Major Changes.” ■

Greta M. Herron is a **Momentum** staff member.