



# Selecting the Right Bathing Systems for Your Facility

**A**mong the variety of bathing systems currently available for long-term care and assisted living facilities are showers, tubs, and in-bed bathing systems. Within these product categories, there are many features and functions to consider in choosing the right bathing system for your facility — one that can facilitate resident comfort and dignity while aiding the caregiver in bathing residents.

## Getting Started

Before evaluating any particular bathing technology, administration should meet with the staff members who are directly involved with bathing to get their feedback on the factors that should be taken into consideration, their current limitations in resident bathing, and specific areas for improvement in bathing processes. You may also want to consult with rehabilitation and accessibility experts to determine your facility's bathing needs. You can also find free, bathing product information on [www.techforltc.org](http://www.techforltc.org), a government-sponsored website.

Consider the cognitive and ambulatory status of your residents, as those factors can dictate the type of bathing technology you should use. For instance, if the residents are relatively dependent, you may want to concentrate on products — such as height-adjustable bathtubs — that can assist caregivers with bathing. On the other hand, if the residents are fairly independent, you can consider bathing systems — such as barrier-free showers — that will maintain their sense of independence.

In determining the best type of bathing technology for the residents and caregivers, you should determine the type of lifts that best suit their needs, as well. If the residents are cognitively and physically able to support themselves in a seated position, you might consider a lift that allows them to do so. Residents without those abilities will likely benefit from a lift that allows them to be transitioned — and subsequently bathed — in a recumbent position.

You should also give some thought to the bathing environment itself. Distant, poorly lit, or poorly drained environments make for hazardous work areas for your caregivers and may make bathing even more difficult for your relatively independent residents. It is also vital to ensure that your chosen bathing environment can accommodate the bathing system you ultimately select, while also allowing the caregivers and residents to move freely around the tub or shower. Be sure to address such environmental concerns when designing your bathing facilities. Décor also has a huge impact. Many traditional tub rooms are dreary and uninviting, and can seem scary to those with dementia. Creating a pleasing environment with color, plants, music, aromatherapy, and artwork can make the bathing experience more pleasant.

It may be helpful to identify a project champion — a member of your staff who has the necessary administrative skills to coordinate the purchasing and implementation processes and who can encourage other staff members to more readily adapt to any resulting process changes. This champion can also serve as your staff's point person should any questions about the new system arise after implementation.

## Evaluating Bathing Technologies

When evaluating a new bathing system, many factors — including versatility, adaptability, and cost-effectiveness — come into play. In addition, there are a variety of features and functions that can make bathing more efficient and easier for your staff members, and safer and more comfortable for the residents.

If you have determined that showers are the most appropriate type of bathing system for the residents, accessibility, privacy, and safety should all be considered for an optimal shower area. Consider selecting a shower that will create a smooth



Photos courtesy of Best Bath Systems

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transition from the surrounding floor during entry, particularly if residents will be transitioned into the shower in a shower chair. If the shower has a lip, your residents must be able to step over the edge safely when entering and exiting the shower. A rubber lip can help keep water from leaking on to the floor and can be easily wheeled over or safely stepped on. Non-slip flooring and anti-scalding devices provide added safety. Easy-to-reach and -utilize controls can minimize overreaching and strain for both residents and caregivers, and built-in stabilizers or grab bars can provide the extra support for balancing, and thus lead to increased safety. Furthermore, smooth fiberglass wall surfaces are easier to clean and disinfect than grooved tile areas.

If your facility has decided to purchase tubs, consider tubs with a walk-in or side-entry feature that can accommodate residents that are able to ambulate, and use a transfer chair for less mobile residents. This type of system can maintain a certain level of independence for those who are capable, yet aid those who require added assistance. Rear-entry and recumbent tubs are also available to accommodate residents using wheelchairs or residents who can otherwise not physically support themselves during entry, bathing, and egress. You should also evaluate tubs with infection-control systems to reduce the risk of cross-contamination among residents. Tubs are available with a variety of disinfecting systems, including ultraviolet and whirlpool disinfectant technology. A quick-fill tub can be filled in less than two minutes and, by expediting the bathing process, can decrease anxiety for some residents who are already reluctant to bathe. That said, the speed at which the water enters the tub can also elicit fear in some residents. Keep the needs of your residents in mind when deciding whether or not to purchase a quick-fill tub. As with showers, easy-to-reach and -utilize tub controls can prevent caregivers from straining, and anti-scalding systems can improve resident safety.

Several in-bed bathing systems are also available. For instance, an inflatable



Photo courtesy of Invacare Continuing Care Group

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bed bathtub can be inflated around the resident using a wet-dry vacuum. A handheld showerhead can connect to a tap several feet away, and the drain hose can lead to a tub, toilet, or sink. To provide the feeling of a shower, set the system to drain constantly, or create the feeling of a tub by draining the device after bathing is completed.

### Improved Resident Comfort

In selecting a bathing system and designing your bathing environment, your primary focus should be on how the resident will receive the bathing experience, with a secondary focus on how the environment supports the caregiver and the resident. Ask yourself the following questions: Does the resident perceive the bathing area as a cold, sterile, institutional setting? Has the bath area been made to look more like home? Is it visually appealing, with softer colors and decorative wall hangings? As an example, you can easily improve the look and feel of your bathing environment by replacing plain, dull shower curtains with decorative ones. In addition, you should decrease clutter in your bathing area; avoid using it as a storage unit for unused equipment. To further improve patient comfort, consider raising the temperature in your bathing environment.

### Bathing Disposables

In calculating the costs associated with a particular bathing technology, you should also consider the cost of any necessary disposable products and how their purchase will effect your overall costs. There are many no-rinse products – such as shampoos, body baths, hand sanitizers, and wipes – available to provide a comfortable alternative to traditional bathing practices. Consider products that do not include alcohol, as it can promote drying of the skin, and products with non-irritating formulas to reduce harmful skin reactions.

### Staff Training

It is important to educate the staff, not only on safety issues to keep in mind while assisting residents in bathing, but also – just as importantly – on how the individual resident perceives the bathing process. Caregivers should make the

process as comfortable and pleasing as possible. A caregiver who tries different methods to promote a successful bathing experience will have an easier time communicating with the resident and achieving a successful outcome. Caregivers should provide residents with encouraging words and warm towels, and can minimize resident anxiety by washing the body section by section – rather than all at once – and by having all of the necessary supplies ready and within reach. Staff should be encouraged to try out the equipment to see what the experience is like before bathing residents.

### Conclusion

When purchasing new bathing equipment, consider both the current and future needs of the residents, in order to spare your facility the costs of remodeling your bathing environment down the road. Bathing systems can be relatively expensive, but the initial investment may be offset by the savings associated with improved staff member efficiency and decreased worker's compensation claims from bathing-related injuries. ■

*Stacey Biddle, COTA/L, is a project manager at IDEAS Inc. (Innovative Designs in Environments for an Aging Society), working on grants from the National Institute of Aging and the Alzheimer's Association. With degrees in art therapy and occupational therapy, Biddle has provided direct service for 15 years to seniors in long-term, sub-acute, and home health care settings, and has experience modifying environments to enhance older adults' quality of life. She is involved with the editorial process for a book about bathing and personal care of individuals with dementia. Biddle is also involved with the federally funded website [www.techforltc.org](http://www.techforltc.org), which provides long-term care professionals with purchasing guidance for a variety of products.*

### WHERE TO FIND BATHING SYSTEMS:

Vendor	Reader Service Number	Website
Apollo Corporation	99	<a href="http://www.apollobath.com">www.apollobath.com</a>
Aqua Bath Company, Inc.	33	<a href="http://www.aquabath.com">www.aquabath.com</a>
Aqua Glass Corporation	34	<a href="http://www.aquaglass.com">www.aquaglass.com</a>
ARJO, Inc.	98	<a href="http://www.arjo.com">www.arjo.com</a>
Best Bath Systems	97	<a href="http://www.best-bath.com">www.best-bath.com</a>
BHM Medical, Inc.	84	<a href="http://www.bhm-medical.com">www.bhm-medical.com</a>
Bodyline Products International, Inc.	31	<a href="http://www.bodyvacproducts.com">www.bodyvacproducts.com</a>
Clarion Bathware	35	<a href="http://www.clarionbathware.com">www.clarionbathware.com</a>
Comfort Designs	88	<a href="http://www.comfortdesignsbathware.com">www.comfortdesignsbathware.com</a>
Enneking Medical, Inc.	37	<a href="http://www.ennekingmedical.com">www.ennekingmedical.com</a>
Horcher Lifting Systems	38	<a href="http://www.horcherusa.com">www.horcherusa.com</a>
Invacare Continuing Care Group	94	<a href="http://www.invacare-ccg.com">www.invacare-ccg.com</a>
Lasco Bathware	32	<a href="http://www.lascobathware.com">www.lascobathware.com</a>
MasterCare Patient Equipment, Inc.	96	<a href="http://www.mastercarebath.net">www.mastercarebath.net</a>
Noram Solutions	36	<a href="http://www.norampatientcare.com">www.norampatientcare.com</a>
Penner Patient Care Inc.	85	<a href="http://www.pennercareinc.com">www.pennercareinc.com</a>
Rane Bathing Systems	95	<a href="http://www.ranetubs.com">www.ranetubs.com</a>
Storm & Associates	89	<a href="http://www.davidstorm.com">www.davidstorm.com</a>
T.H.E. Medical	86	<a href="http://www.themedical.com">www.themedical.com</a>
TR Group Inc.	87	<a href="http://www.trequipment.com">www.trequipment.com</a>



# BUYER'S GUIDE: BATHING SYSTEMS

On the pages that follow, *ACP&P* highlights a variety of bathing systems currently available in the market. To request more information on any of the vendors listed in the buyer's guide, simply circle its corresponding reader service number on *ACP&P*'s free reader service card (bound in each issue).

## • Apollo Corporation

Apollo's **Advantage** whirlpool bathing system includes a no-lift entry to reduce the risk of injury and anxiety for both the resident and caregiver. A reservoir system fills the tub in 90 seconds, while the patented **Remedy UV Infection Control System** reduces the risk of contracting nosocomial infections during bathing. Remedy's point disinfection offers an additional level of infection control.



For more information, circle reader service number 99 or visit [www.apollobath.com](http://www.apollobath.com)

## • ARJO, Inc.

The bathing cycle of ARJO's **Parker Bath** is designed to be safe, comfortable, and dignified for residents at all stages. It combines side entry with powered raising, lowering, and reclining capabilities, resulting in no manual lifting, strain, or stress on the caregiver. System options include a variable-speed air spa, soap dispenser, and a wall-mounted cleaner/disinfection system. Support accessories are available for individualized comfort.



For more information, circle reader service number 98 or visit [www.arjo.com](http://www.arjo.com)

## • Storm & Associates

Because research has shown that incontinent accidents occur in more than 85% of showers, the **Melanie Shower System** is equipped with a combination gravity-fed and battery-powered pump to address such incidents. All waste water drains directly into a standard or handicap toilet or transfers into the optional rolling reservoir. The unit's door slides out completely, and its gasket creates a watertight seal to prevent spills. The sliding seat rolls to the front to allow for easy entry and exit.



For more information, circle reader service number 89 or visit [www.davidstorm.com](http://www.davidstorm.com)

## • Best Bath Systems

▶▶ The **Escape Step-in Bath** is a step-in bathtub with a watertight door. The tub includes safety features such as a bar for balancing and a non-skid floor. At 17 inches high, the contoured seat assists the user in sitting down and standing up. The 29-inch-deep tub's stainless-steel door handle is designed for easy opening and closing to ensure a waterproof seal. Optional hydro jets or air jet systems and decorative valves and fill spout with a handheld showerhead are also available. The upgraded thermostatically controlled valve can ensure bath water is drawn at the same temperature every time the tub is filled. The 31-inch-deep **Escape Plus** features a flip-up seat, which provides more room inside the tub for the bather. At 17.5 inches wide, the **Escape Plus** can make tub access and egress easier.



◀◀ The ADA-compliant **3CS3838A5T** shower comes in three pieces for remodeling, and is also available in a one-piece configuration for new construction. The resident is able to transfer from a wheelchair onto the seat with ease, and water controls are all within easy reach.



◀◀ The **LDS6337A75B** shower can accommodate a seat, or a wheelchair can be rolled into the shower. The pan features a collapsible water retainer to keep the bathroom floor dry. With Best Bath's custom color system, facilities can match the showers to existing interior designs.

For more information, circle reader service number 97 or visit [www.best-bath.com](http://www.best-bath.com)

## • Bodyline Products International, Inc.

The **BodyVac** in-bed bathing system allows caregivers to bathe bariatric, Alzheimer's, dementia, ventilator-dependent, and otherwise fragile patients and residents without lifting or transferring them and without wetting patients' bedding. The BodyVac is a centrifugal water cleansing system that simultaneously sprays a warm water and soap mist and returns the used water to a self-contained holding tank. When the BodyVac showerhead is touched to the patient's skin, a shutter automatically opens to release a fine warm-water-and-soap mist. With BodyVac, caregivers can perform body, hair, and peri care within 20 minutes.



For more information, circle reader service number 31 or visit [www.bodyvacproducts.com](http://www.bodyvacproducts.com)

• **Comfort Designs**

▶▶ Comfort Designs' **ADA 36" Transfer Showers** include a 1.25-inch or 1.5-inch diameter L-shaped grab bar with 1.5-inch wall clearance and an L-shaped seat with 1.5-inch wall clearance. The frameless seats are reinforced and mounted with steel plates to sustain a load of over 500 pounds. The showers also have up to a 0.5-inch allowable curb and meet accessibility codes.



◀◀ The 60-by-30-inch or 60-by-36-inch **ADA 60" Curb-less Shower** offers an L-shaped fold-up seat with an L-shaped grab bar or a U-shaped grab-bar and no seat, along with a curb-less threshold. The frameless seats are reinforced and mounted with steel plates to sustain a load of over 500 pounds. A collapsible dam provides water-spillage control in corners. For Alzheimer's applications, the look of tile provides intuitive value, assisting memory and environment recognition, and contrasting color bars can provide further definition and assist in depth perception. Also, controls can be installed on the outside of the shower to keep them out of the patient's reach.



◀◀ The **Glacier Bay Walk-In Tub** features a low threshold and large door for easy entry and exit, as well as tall walls and sturdy doors for support and security. The tub also offers a deep soaking bay with a seat, whirlpool jets, air jets, and shower.

For more information, circle reader service number 88 or visit [www.comfortdesignsbathware.com](http://www.comfortdesignsbathware.com)

• **Lasco Bathware**



**Freedomline** sectional, low-threshold showers feature a grout-less designer tile pattern. The four-piece pocketed sectional design and proprietary front-install system promote ease of installation in both remodel and new construction applications. Standard features include a gelcoat finish, three available widths (36, 42, or 60 inches), a center drain, and a slip-resistant floor. When fully equipped, the showers are ADA/ANSI compliant.

For more information, circle reader service number 32 or visit [www.lascobathware.com](http://www.lascobathware.com)

• **Aqua Bath Company Inc.**



The **Care Series Model C6536F-FUS 3/4"** can accommodate a wheelchair or shower chair and meets ANSI and ADA guidelines for accessibility. With a one-piece, acrylic construction, the shower measures 60 by 36 by 78 inches, includes a stainless-steel grab bar with mounting plates and a shower curtain rod, and can be furnished with a valve, handheld shower set, curtain, and hooks.



The **Care Series Model C4136BF-FUS 3/4"** meets ANSI and ADA guidelines for accessibility and features a one-piece, acrylic construction. With inside dimensions of 36 by 36 by 78 inches, the shower includes stainless-steel grab bars with mounting plates and a curtain rod. This model can also be furnished with a factory-installed fold-up seat, valve, handheld shower set, curtain, and hooks.

For more information, circle reader service number 33 or visit [www.aquabath.com](http://www.aquabath.com)

• **MasterCare Patient Equipment, Inc.**

The **MasterCare Entrée Bath** features a barrier-free access side opening, which allows the bath seat to extend over the floor surface. The cantilevered design can provide easy patient access with the use of a



wheelchair slide, sling, or lift. The door is self-storing and rotates to open and closed positions with the push of a button. The tub's drainage system diverts minor leaks and residual water to the drain.

The **MasterCare Integrity Bath** features a front-entry system and a chair that locks to the tub base for patient transfer and to the rail system during



bathing. An optional multi-position, reclining chair is available. The tub's headrest aids in shampooing and can prevent patient neck strain. A leg rest lifts the patient's legs for transfer and allows for easy caregiver access to the lower extremities during bathing. The tub also includes a standard on-board liquid-dispensing and auto-disinfecting system. The unit's service doors can also offer a lockable storage area.

For more information, circle reader service number 96 or visit [www.mastercarebath.net](http://www.mastercarebath.net)



• **Invacare Continuing Care Group**

▶▶ The **Supine Tub Series** is designed to provide semi-ambulatory and non-ambulatory residents with the benefits of hydro-massage therapy. Strategically located hydro-massage jets aid in increasing blood circulation, relieving pain, and facilitating wound healing. Each tub in the Supine series is sized for full immersion. Models include the Access 6300 Supine Tub and the height-adjustable Access 6300ADH Supine Tub.



◀◀ The **Free-Standing Side Access Series** provides side access for ambulatory residents requiring minimal caregiver assistance. A large, wide door swings to a full open position for transfers. All tubs in this series can be used with or without a lift or transfer device. Models include the Access 3650 and the Access 3600XL.

▶▶ The **Recessed Side Access System** was designed to provide specialized bathing in a system that resembles a traditional bathtub or shower unit. A contoured interior can maximize patient comfort and a perineal cutout in the bathing seat allows for full-immersion bathing while seated. Both tubs in this series – the Access 3750 Assisted Living Unit and the Access 3800 Alzheimer's Unit – can be installed in a standard tub/shower alcove.



For more information, circle reader service number 94 or visit [www.invacare-ccg.com](http://www.invacare-ccg.com)

• **Rane Bathing Systems**

▶▶ The **Rane RA-8 Preva** is a freestanding bathing system designed for supine-positioned bathers. Appropriate for skilled nursing and rehabilitation facilities, its open-base design allows for the use of a wide range of patient lifting and transfer devices. The height-adjustable bath can accommodate a wide range of caregivers and bathing situations. The Preva is available with a 12-jet air spa system or four-jet whirlpool system, and, like all Rane products, includes a built-in disinfection system.



◀◀ The **Rane RK-12 Solay** is a freestanding bathing system that allows an attendant to move around the entire unit for total access to the bather. The Solay is lift-accessible, and designed to accommodate ambulatory patients and allow easy wheelchair transfers. The Solay features a built-in disinfectant system and optional built-in digital scale, with no wall-mounted accessories. The Solay is available with a whirlpool or 12-jet air spa system.

▶▶ The **Rane RN-5 Audrey**, a walk-in tub-shower combination, features a wide-opening door that can be configured to be left- or right-opening and is compatible with a wide variety of lift chairs. The Audrey is available with a 12-jet air spa system or a two-jet whirlpool system, or as a soaker tub.



◀◀ The **Rane RR-7 Nuvia** features a 12-jet air spa system and reclining and raising functions, incorporated into a one-touch control panel. The Nuvia's self-contained disinfection and scale systems can eliminate the need for wall-mounted accessories. The tub was also designed for low water usage.

For more information, circle reader service number 95 or visit [www.ranetubs.com](http://www.ranetubs.com)

• **Clarion Bathware**

The **MP3940BF34CD** ADA-compliant shower measures 40 by 39 by 78.25 inches and features a one-piece, fiberglass-reinforced gelcoat construction. With a 0.75-inch barrier-free threshold, slip-resistant floor, and center drain, the shower is available in a white, biscuit, bone, or sterling silver finish.



The **M6333BF34** ADA-compliant shower measures 63 by 33.75 by 78 inches and features a one-piece, fiberglass-reinforced gelcoat construction. With a 0.75-inch barrier-free threshold, slip-resistant floor, and center drain, the shower is available in a white, biscuit, bone, or sterling silver finish.



The **MP8011L/MP8012R** tub/shower measures 60 by 33 by 76 inches and features a one-piece, fiberglass-reinforced gelcoat construction. The walls feature a simulated tile texture and valves can be installed on either the left or right wall. The tub/shower is available in white, bone, or sterling silver finish.



For more information, circle reader service number 35 or visit [www.clarionbathware.com](http://www.clarionbathware.com)