HINTS FOR HOMEOWNERS

Know Before You Go: Don't Flush Money Away When Choosing A Toilet

(NAPSA)—When it comes to toilets, most people don't give them much thought—unless they're overflowing, or in need of a cleaning. However, a national mandate has required many homeowners to reconsider—and, in a number of cases, replace—their toilets.

Today, all toilets must flush on only 1½ gallons of water, which has forced people to consider the notion of toilet performance. After all, this mandate is expecting current models to do the same job as their predecessors with 60 percent less water.

Today's technologies

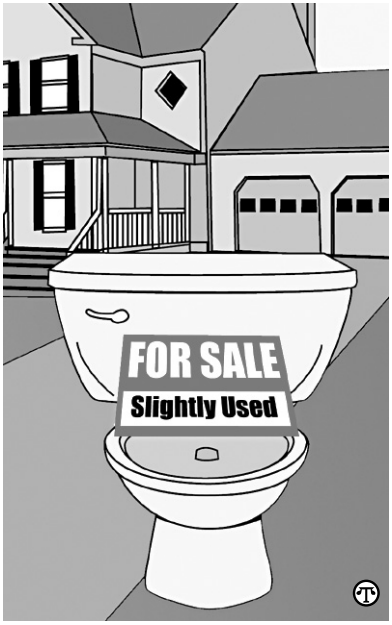
There are currently two basic toilet technologies used in homes, and both have their advantages and disadvantages.

The most common system is referred to as "gravity-fed." This type of toilet is easily identified because when you lift the tank lid and look inside, you will see the flush water is held within the tank. This technology is designed to deliver water to the bowl at a rate that allows the trapway to fill with water, developing a siphon action that empties the bowl.

Advantages: Common technology, relatively low cost (around $115, on average), serviceable parts sold retail.

Disadvantages: Less water in the bowl; more cleaning required; smaller, more complicated trapway; doesn't flush the same volume of waste.

Relatively new to the market (within the last 15 years) is "pressure-assist" technology. This system uses a vessel within the toilet tank. The vessel is designed to harness water line pressure coming into the toilet, so when the toilet is flushed, the vessel creates a pressurized flush. The bowls are specially designed to use this pressure flush to push the waste out of the bowl, instead of pulling it.



In today's toilets, larger, simpler trapways often indicate better performance.

Advantages: More water in the bowl; less cleaning required; simple trapway sizes and push action create better flush, eliminates clogging; and non-sweating, insulated tank.

Disadvantages: Toilets cost slightly more (starting at around $200), perceived to be noisier (studies show similar noise levels to gravity-fed models).

How do you choose?

The best way to choose a toilet is to ask yourself some simple questions, such as:

- How did your old toilet, using four or more gallons per flush, perform? If it did the job, then gravity-fed might do; if not, better consider pressure-assist.
- In which bathroom will the toilet be located? If it's the kids' bathroom, you should consider your needs for a better flush. If sleeping quarters are in the attached room, you might want to consider the noise aspect.
- How old is the plumbing system? Most systems were designed for older toilets, meaning pipes are larger in diameter than what is needed. If you have any problem with your draining, you should consider the pressure-assist system.

Most toilets marketed today indicate that they use only 1.6 gallons per flush. The consumer is thinking that might save them money on their water bill. However, if you double-flush to achieve performance, what are you saving?

One rule of purchasing has not changed: you get what you pay for. Look for toilets that have larger water surface areas and larger, simpler trapways for the best performance. And, above all, know your needs *before* you buy. You must get the decision right the first time for a simple reason: you don't see want ads for slightly used toilets.

For more information on toilet technology, visit the Web site at www.flushmate.com.