

Buyers Guide

Bedpans and Urinals



Buyers Guide to Bedpans and Urinals

The need to use a toileting aid such as a bedpan or urinal can be difficult and frustrating for us to accept. Add to that the confusing array of product types and designs that are available for us to choose from, and the experience of purchasing and using a toileting aid can become even more difficult and stressful.

This independent Buyers Guide will help you decide which type of product is best for you or the person you are caring for, and aims to make the purchasing experience as stress free as possible.

Choosing a Bedpan or Urinal

There are many reasons why you or a person you care for may need to use a toileting aid. Getting out of bed to use the toilet may be difficult or even impossible as a result of illness, injury, surgery or long-term immobility. Or maybe just getting to the bathroom quickly is difficult due to incontinence issues, or there is a lack of bathroom access when travelling.

There are many styles of bedpans and urinals available on the market for use in hospitals, nursing care homes or for use in the home, and the choice can be very daunting.

The best way to decide which type of product is best for your individual needs is to think about:

- Will it be used by a male or female?
- What is the mobility of the user?
- Where will it need to be used?
- How often will it need to be used?
- How often will it need to be moved from place to place?
- Will it be for short-term or long-term use?
- What is the size and weight of the user?
- Will the user need to use the product unassisted?

Should You Choose a Bedpan or a Urinal?

Your choice of toileting aid needs to largely depend on whether it is for male or female use and the physical mobility of the user. A bedpan is normally used in a sitting or lying position, whilst a urinal can be used sitting or standing.

Generally men prefer to use a bedpan for bowel movements and a urinal bottle to collect urine. Women tend to use a bedpan for both functions, whilst some ladies may now prefer an anatomically shaped female urinal bottle.

You also need to consider whether you need to measure and monitor urine output for health reasons. If so, you'll need to choose a urinal bottle with a graduated scale for measuring. Capacity is also another consideration – does the product need to have a large capacity if the user has to wait until morning for the device to be emptied? Bedpans tend to have larger liquid capacities than urinal bottles.

A final consideration is will the device be used in a hospital or care home, at home or whilst travelling? Hospital and nursing staff are trained in the use of bedpans and urinals and have specialist facilities for the cleaning of re-usable devices and the removal of disposable products.

Home users must consider the convenience of using and emptying the product. Most home users and carers will prefer plastic re-usable devices as the contents can be emptied down the toilet and the product easily hand washed with hot water and detergent.

Bedpans

Bedpans are small portable “toilets” that are used for passing urine or stools, usually whilst in bed or sat on a chair. They are most useful for those with limited physical mobility and have a carer to assist them. They are ideal for people who are unable to get out of bed or transfer from a chair to a toilet or commode, or who are likely to fall whilst using a commode.

There are many styles of bedpans available which fall in to three broad designs:

The concave pan



This has a rounded triangular shape that slopes from back to front, has a slightly curved seat and is used for urine collection only.

The cutaway pan

This has a rounded triangular shape with a flatter seat and rolled edges that allow for hand gripping. These are best suited to people that can sit on the bedpan whilst in bed or on a chair.



The slipper pan



This is a wedge or rounded rectangular shape. One end is flattened to go under the person and there is a handle at the other end. These are designed for people recuperating from a bone fracture or surgery to the lower body and are unable to sit up.

Disposable bedpans



There are also disposable bedpans that are made of recycled (pulp) paper. These are more suited to hospital and care home use rather than personal use at home. Disposable bedpans need to be used with a special bedpan support holder.

Pulp paper bedpans require specialist handling and equipment for disposal, known as a macerator. This is why they are mainly used in hospitals and care homes. Disposable products are suitable for short term use but for longer term use, a plastic re-usable product will be a much better option.

Commodes

People able to transfer from a bed or a chair may benefit from using a commode chair. This is a stable chair that holds a commode pan or bucket under the seat and can be used as a toilet. A commode pan can also be placed over a bathroom toilet to assist personal washing and allow the user to retain some of their independence.

Commode bucket



– for use in a commode chair.

Commode pan



– that can be used as a bidet.

The cutaway style bedpan can also be used under some commode chairs but this should be checked with the bedpan and commode chair manufacturer.

Safety and Comfort for the Bedpan User

When choosing a bedpan, you need to be assured that the device will be comfortable, sturdy, and safe to use. The material that the bedpan is made from and the design of the product will have an impact on this.

Bedpan Design

Whatever the style of bedpan, it should be anatomically shaped to fit the body shape. The bedpan should have no internal rims in which bacteria can hide and multiply. All edges should be contoured and surfaces should be smooth.

Whether the bedpan is made from plastic, stainless steel or pulp paper, it should be a one-piece moulding with no joins or seams as this reduces the risk of contamination from hidden bacteria. This design style also gives additional strength to the product.

Many bedpans are now available to purchase with a lid and these reduce the risk of spills and odours and are more pleasant for the user or carer to carry. However, you must ensure that the lid fits securely but is also easy to remove. Most plastic bedpans come with a carry handle or in the case of slipper pans, have a long handle to assist placing the bedpan under immobile patients.

Material

When choosing your bedpan you will face a considerable choice of products that will be made from plastic, stainless steel or pulp-paper. Plastic and stainless steel devices will be re-usable, whilst pulp paper is disposable.

Stainless steel bedpans can be cold to touch and use, noisy, and heavy to handle. They are also expensive to purchase. Disposable versions may be suitable for short-term use or if you don't want to worry about cleaning and washing. However pulp-paper products will need specialist handling and disposal so are best suited to hospitals and nursing homes that can dispose of them in line with clinical waste regulations.



Stainless steel re-usable bedpan.



Pulp paper disposable re-usable bedpan.

Many healthcare professionals today prefer to use hard-wearing plastic bedpans. Plastic versions are lightweight and easy to handle, strong, warm to touch, comfortable to use, and low cost. The preferred plastic material is polypropylene (PP) due to its strength, ease of handling, and its ability to withstand the high



Plastic re-usable bedpan.

washing temperatures required by hospital standards.

Look for polypropylene bedpans that comply with the stringent requirements of **British Standards BS 2588 for Re-usable Portable Sanitary Pans**.

British Standards

All bedpans manufactured and sold in the UK must comply with **BS 2588 for Re-usable Portable Sanitary Pans**. This standard ensures a minimum quality and performance of the bedpan, giving you the re-assurance that it will be strong, stable, safe and easy to use.

Bedpans that comply with BS 2588 have met stringent product requirements such as:

- Material strength
- Surface finish
- Chemical resistance
- Strength
- Stability
- Ease of cleaning
- Durability
- Weight tolerance
- Design

The Standard specifies weight tolerance requirements for 3 types of bedpans:

- Type 1 Sanitary pans for adults with a body mass of 25kg – 160kg (3 stone – 25 stone)
- Type 2 Sanitary pans for infants and children with a body mass not exceeding 25 kg (3 stone 11lb)
- Type 3 Sanitary pans such as slipper and fracture pans that are designed to slide under patients lying down.

The most commonly used types of bedpan will be Type 1 and Type 3.

Some older style bedpans known as ‘perfection’ or ‘oak leaf’ bedpans do not comply with BS 2588 as they are difficult to clean and they have a high risk of contamination from hidden bacteria due to their rim design.



Perfection or oak leaf style bedpans are difficult to clean and can be a bacteria risk due to their rim design.

Bedpans that do not comply with BS 2588 cannot be guaranteed to meet the minimum performance and safety standards so always check your chosen product or packaging for the British Standards BS 2588 identification.

European Standards

All bedpans sold in Europe must show the CE logo. Products with the CE mark show compliance with European rules for selling medical products, including bedpans. This mark indicates that the product complies with European Directive EEC 93/42, which covers the manufacture and placing of medical devices in to European markets.

Urinals

A urinal is essentially a handheld portable toilet used by people unable to use a bathroom toilet. It can either be a bottle or ‘pan’ style and is used to collect urine only.

Urinal bottles usually have a cap or lid so that waste is contained – meaning there is less chance of spillage and the bottle is less obtrusive if the contents can’t be emptied right away, or if the bottle needs to be attached to a wheelchair or bed frame. A urinal bottle can be used in a sitting or standing position, whilst a urinal pan is used in a sitting or lying position. Modern urinal bottles will be anatomically designed for male or female use.

Male urinal bottles

The urinal bottle is the best option in comparison to a bedpan for men when urinating, irrespective of whether the user is upright or lying down. Most male handheld urinal bottles are very similar in size and shape with a narrowed opening at the ‘neck’ of the bottle.



Male urinal bottle with handle.



Male urinal bottle without handle.

Female urinal bottles

Female users can sometimes find it more difficult than men to use these devices, but design improvements have reduced spills and leaks significantly. Flow can be controlled better on bottles that have a wider opening at the neck, allowing for the bottle to be angled appropriately once placed firmly against the skin.



Female urinal bottle with handle.

Slipper or petal pans are commonly used by females in a sitting position as an alternative to a urinal bottle.



Female urinal slipper pan.



Female urinal petal pan.

Safety and Comfort for the Urinal User

Slipper or petal pans are commonly used by females in a sitting position as an alternative to a urinal bottle.

When choosing a urinal, you need to be assured that the device will be comfortable, sturdy, and safe to use. The material that the urinal is made from and the design of the product will have an impact on this.

Urinal Design

Whether you choose a urinal bottle or a urinal pan, the best products will be anatomically shaped to fit the male or female body. Although there are now some newer bottles available on the market that have a unisex adaptor, making them suitable for males and females. To ensure user comfort and safety, all edges should be contoured and surfaces should be smooth with no hidden rims that can attract bacteria.

Urinal bottles should be smoothly shaped and fit comfortably between the legs. Look for designs with easy to hold handles if you have limited hand movement. Flat bottomed bottles are more stable and less likely to spill. Urinal pans can be heavy to carry when full and if hand control is restricted, then the user may need assistance to empty the pan.



Slipper urinal pan with lid.

Modern urinal bottles are made from clear plastic with a graduated scale which is useful for checking urine output and colour where necessary.

Some male urinal bottles are compatible with 'non-return' valves to prevent back flow of urine from the bottle and potential spillage after use. These are particularly suitable if it is not possible to empty the bottle for long periods of time.



Non-return valve.



Flat bottomed bottles are more stable after use.

Many urinal bottles or urinal pans have a secure fitting lid which reduces the risk of leaks, spills and odours. These are particularly ideal for users that may have to wait until morning for a carer to empty the bottle or bedpan.



Urinal bottle with lid.



Male urinal bottle with compatible non-return valve.

Material

There is a wide range of urinal bottles and urinal pans available that are made from either plastic, stainless steel or pulp-paper. Plastic and stainless steel devices will be re-usable, whilst pulp paper is disposable.

Stainless steel urinals can be cold to touch and use, heavy to handle and noisy to use. They are also expensive to purchase and can sometimes cause irritation to the skin. Disposable versions may be suitable for short-term use or if you don't want to worry about cleaning and washing. However pulp-paper products will need specialist handling and disposal so are best suited to hospitals and nursing homes that can dispose of them in line with clinical waste regulations.



Plastic re-usable urinal bottle.



Pulp paper disposable urinal bottle.

Many healthcare professionals today prefer to use hard-wearing plastic urinals. Plastic versions are lightweight and easy to handle strong, warm to touch, comfortable to use, and low cost. The preferred plastics are polyethylene (HDPE) or polypropylene (PP) for strength, durability and low cost. Polyethylene urinals are often favoured for personal use at home as these can simply be washed with water and detergents. Polypropylene products tend to be preferred in hospitals due to its ability to withstand the high washing temperatures required by hospital standards.

Look for polypropylene or polyethylene urinals that comply with the stringent requirements of **British Standards BS 3215 Re-usable Portable Urinals.**

British Standards

All urinals manufactured and sold in the UK must comply with **British Standard BS 3215 Re-usable Portable Urinals**. This standard ensures a minimum quality and performance of the urinal, giving you the re-assurance that it will be strong, stable, safe and easy to use.

Urinals that comply with BS 3215 have met stringent product requirements such as:

- Material strength
- Surface finish
- Chemical resistance
- Strength
- Stability
- Ease of cleaning
- Durability
- Weight tolerance
- Design

Urinals that do not comply with BS 3215 cannot be guaranteed to meet the minimum performance and safety standards so always check your chosen product or packaging for the British Standards BS 3215 identification.

European Standards

All urinals sold in Europe must show the CE logo. Products with the CE Mark show compliance with European rules for selling medical products including bedpans. This mark indicates that the product complies with European Directive EEC 93/42, which covers the manufacture and placing of medical devices in to European markets.

Storage

If a urinal bottle is to be used whilst in bed or a wheelchair, you may want to store the urinal bottle within easy reach. In this case it is important to select a urinal bottle that is compatible with a bottle holder. Bottle holders are simple devices that securely hold the bottle within easy reach when not in use. They are ideal for hanging on a bedframe or wheelchair.



Hanging bottle holder.



Urinal bottle in hanging bottle holder.

Warwick SASCo has been manufacturing and supplying polypropylene medical devices for over 30 years. Our expertise in medical plastics has led us to be recognised as the market leader in medical polyware in over 65 countries around the world.

Our wide range of polyware products includes urinal bottles, bedpans, drinking cups, and sterilisable medical devices. When you choose Warwick SASCo, you are choosing a high quality, long-lasting and innovative product that gives you excellent value for money.

All our products are Made in Britain, comply with stringent British Standards and are CE Marked under European Directive EEC 93/42 as Class 1 Medical Devices.



For more information on our product range, visit www.sasco.co.uk

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