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Low-flow showerheads can rise above bad rap

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Special to the Sentinel

Kramer: Hey. Super's in my bathroom changing my shower head. Have they changed your shower head?

Jerry: No, he's doing mine next. They're low flow, you know.

Kramer: Low flow? Well, I don't like the sound of that ...

Sadly, the low-flow showerhead has a bad reputation preceding its performance. Horror stories such as this one, featured in "The Shower" episode of the sitcom Seinfeld, show people so desperate for decent spray to get the suds out that they resort to buying the Commando 450 on the black market.

The truth is, manufacturers have improved at making low-flow showerheads, and the U.S. government now regulates that new showerheads sold here must be limited to a flow of 2.5 gallons per minute or less. If you go to a hardware store and purchase a showerhead these days, they're *all* low-flow.

The trick to a good low-flow showerhead is finding the one that's right for you. There are a million choices, so start by asking yourself these questions:

- Do I want a showerhead I can turn off without using the faucet? You can maintain water temperature by getting one with an on-off lever.
- What sort of features do I want? (Do I want a showerhead that feels like its raining? Do I want a massaging showerhead? Do I want a showerhead that has so much pressure it feels like the water is drilling a hole in my head?)

Once you answer these questions, you're ready to shop and compare before you buy, like William Shatner on those commercials. You can spend \$13 to \$700 if you want. I bought a few massage showerheads for less than \$20 and took them home to try out, and here is my favorite.

The winner:

Delta, four-spray chrome showerhead for \$15.70 at Home Depot. The crossing, massage crossing, narrow and narrow massage spray options allow you to pick what you want.

Easy to install. Lifetime warranty.

For more information on installing low-flow showerheads, visit www.thedripwebsite.com.