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Low-flow showerheads not as bad as some think

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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, tell about 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. So we'd better get used to them.

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. This is great for shaving in the shower or people who like taking "military" showers, where you turn the water off to lather and turn it back on to rinse.
- 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 that 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 the commercials. You can spend \$13 or \$700 if you want. Most hardware stores will allow you to return a showerhead if you don't like it for some reason, so try out some models that cost less than \$20 and find a model that your family likes. You might be surprised.

We live in a semiarid climate where droughts will always be a part of our environment. Water for our future means conserving now. The Drought Response Information Project (DRIP) is a collaboration between the valley's domestic water utilities and CSU Cooperative Extension to provide information and educate the public about drought and the importance of water conservation.