

**Justification.** The medics argue that using tissue alone leaves faeces, which exposes many people to urinary tract infections.

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**KAMPALA.** Using dry toilet paper for anal cleaning leaves faeces behind, which exposes one to urinary tract infections (UTIs), doctors have confirmed.

The recovery comes after a new revelation by the American doctors that dry toilet paper “moves shit, but it doesn’t remove it”, which makes women to develop UTIs as the bacteria moves to the urethra.

“If they’re using dry paper, they aren’t washing all of themselves. It’s just unclean,” one of the American doctors says in an article published on the UK’s *Daily Mail* news website.

Dr Ekwaro Obuku, the president of the Uganda Medical Doctors Association (UMA), confirms that one should use both toilet paper and water for cleaning. “Toilet paper removes the faeces while the

# Water more hygienic than toilet paper, say doctors

water cleans everything thoroughly. However, in our setting where most people do not wash their hands after visiting the toilet, the most important thing is to encourage them to do so,” Dr Obuku says.

## Approved

Ms Irene Kasule, a nurse, approves Dr Obuku’s assertion, saying she does not feel clean when she does not use both toilet paper and soap.

“I think it is better we use both... it is disgusting to touch the faeces directly... first clean with tissue then use water for thorough cleaning,” Ms Kasule says.

However, others argue that using water alone is not practical since it

would mean they have to touch the faeces directly.

“Toilet paper would do better because it can dry easily other than water ...it is hard to use that bare hand to wipe,” says Ms Allen Nakanwagi, an entrepreneur.

## DIFFICULT OPTION

**Concerns:** The option of using water to directly clean faeces may apparently be hard to encourage in a country where only 27 per cent people wash their hands with water and soap after using the toilet.

Dr Vincent Karuhanga of Friends Polyclinic in Kampala emphasises that using water or wipes would be the best if one can manage to wash their hands well after visiting the toilet.

“What is true is that 70 per cent of the bacteria that causes urinary tract infections come from the anus, and pure wiping is one way in which it can be prevented,” Dr Karuhanga states, adding that toilet paper makes it [the faeces] to stick there and that many people have hair in the bums.

Recent statistics from the Mulago Hospital obstetrics and gynaecology department have also indicated that at least five cases of

UTIs are registered on a daily basis, with doctors arguing that women are more exposed because of the proximity of the urethra to the vagina.

Yet, Dr Charles Kiggundu, a gynaecologist at Mulago Hospital, in a recent interview, said some women have a habit of cleaning themselves from the anus to the vagina, hence increasing chances of getting infections.

## Challenges

In most cases, it is usually Muslims who use water for cleaning after relieving themselves as dictated by the Islamic toilet etiquette as opposed to their Christian counterparts.

The same etiquettes, however, recommend the use of stones in the absence of water.

Worse still, most families in Uganda, especially those in rural areas, cannot afford toilet paper and many improvise with leaves and sometimes stones. Some students and pupils in schools reportedly rub their bums against the wall.