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**Bacon's**

...closely examining the picture of 12208, Knoxville, TN 37912-0208.

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# Texas homeowner asks about sealing shower

P.C. 8

Scripps Howard News Service

C. Dwight Barnett, a master inspector certified by the American Society of Home Inspectors, answers reader questions on home maintenance.

**Question:** I am a homeowner in Texas with a shower stall losing its seal (grout) in strategic places. I have removed the chipped grout from around the shower stall bottom and from between several squares of tile. Should the bottom of the shower be lined with grout or caulk or both?

**Answer:** The bottom gap needs

to be filled with a mildew-resistant bathroom caulk. Dap has a new line of bathroom caulking that has a mildew-resistant ingredient. Ask your paint or hardware dealer for Kwik Seal Plus with Microban (<http://www.dap.com>).

Shower stalls that have a tiled floor or shower stalls that have a fiberglass pan will move when body weight is applied to the floor surface or with the rapid change in temperature when hot water pools on a tiled surface.

Tile grout is rigid like cement and cannot withstand these everyday changes.

Caulking, on the other hand, is somewhat flexible and will stretch

and compress in the opening. For proper adhesion, make sure all the old grout or caulking has been removed and the opening's surface is clean and free of debris, soap and oil. Apply the caulking in one continuous bead using a smooth, even motion while squeezing the tube.

Once caulking has been applied, dampen your index finger and wipe the joint to form a concave seam. Use a damp, clean, closed-cell sponge to wipe up excess caulking. Wash and ring out the sponge after each pass on the seam. The closed-cell sponge should be available where you purchase the caulking.

To repair the seam on a bathtub, clean the seam the same as for the shower. Next, fill the tub with water and then get in and caulk the gap. Why? Because your body's weight plus the weight of the water will make the gap just a little bigger, the way it will be when you are using the tub. When the tub is drained, the gap will squeeze the caulk, but that's better than tearing the caulk.

To remove grout, Dremel (<http://www.dremel.com>) has a grout-removing accessory.

E-mail your questions for C. Dwight Barnett to [dbarnett@evansville.net](mailto:dbarnett@evansville.net).