

Personal Care

Caregiving Series: Volume 8

Objectives

Upon completion of this training, the participant will understand:

- Procedures for providing personal hygiene
- The importance of the principles of body mechanics and infection control
- The need for privacy, honoring individual preferences and the importance of encouraging self-care

Outline

1. Factors in the home environment that affect personal care
2. Importance of using correct body mechanics when moving and lifting
3. Infection control and proper handwashing
4. Gloves
5. Privacy and modesty issues
6. Oral hygiene
7. Complete and partial bed baths
8. Hair care
9. Laundry
10. Dressing
11. Nail care
12. Shaving
13. Shampooing hair in bed



Key Points and Definitions

1. Personal care: Providing care to another person that includes but is not limited to bathing, hair and nail care, oral care, moving and positioning, dressing and undressing.

2. Principles of body mechanics: A set of rules that help maintain the natural curves of the body during any movement.

3. Direct Contact: Germs are spread by touching another person or when handling body fluids. Wearing gloves when providing personal care or handling body fluids reduces exposure to germs.

4. Handwashing technique and hand hygiene: Hand hygiene refers to cleaning hands with an antiseptic hand rub or washing hands with soap and water. Hand hygiene is the simplest, most effective action people can take to reduce the spread of infectious diseases.

5. Alcohol-based hand rubs: Studies have shown that alcohol-based hand rubs are a very effective and convenient method for cleaning hands. They act quickly to kill a wide spectrum of germs. Alcohol-based hand rubs are available as gels or foams.

6. Gloves: Used as a protective barrier against germs. Wear gloves when handling any body fluid and when touching surfaces or equipment that may have been contaminated with body fluid.

7. How to remove gloves: To remove gloves, begin by placing the fingers of your right hand below the left wrist cuff on the outside of the glove. Pull the glove downward until it is off. The left glove is now inside out and held in your right hand. Insert your fingers in the inside cuff of the right glove and pull the right glove down inside out. The right glove now contains the left glove within it. This technique protects you from germs that are on the outside of the gloves. Dispose of the gloves in a lined trash container.

8. Privacy issues: Each person has a unique sense of when privacy is necessary. Some may want to be alone when brushing teeth or applying makeup. Bathing is a time when most people prefer privacy. Privacy includes protecting information about the person's life, finances and condition. This is known as client confidentiality.

9. Honoring individual preferences: Understanding and respecting the person's preferences in care routines is an important part of providing excellent personal care.



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10. Encouraging independence: It may be easier to do things for the other person, but it is better psychologically and physically to encourage the individual to do as much self-care as possible. You may need to deliberately slow your pace to create opportunities for self-care.

11. Oral hygiene: Oral hygiene is cleaning the teeth, gums and tongue. Oral hygiene helps to prevent tooth decay, gum disease and mouth odor. Mouth care is recommended in the morning, after meals, and at night.

12. Flossing: Flossing helps to remove food particles between the teeth. A flossing device allows you to floss another person's teeth safely.

13. Denture care: Removing, cleaning and replacing dentures and bridges. Denture care also includes cleaning the mouth and observing the mouth for redness and sores.

14. Toothette: A swab with a soft sponge on its tip.

15. Dry Mouth: Can result from certain medications or from mouth breathing. Sugarless hard candy, frequent sips of water, ice chips and moistened toothettes are ways to relieve dryness. You can also use a spray bottle to mist the mouth.

16. Bed bath: Bathing cleanses the skin by removing bacteria and decreasing body odor. It stimulates circulation and helps to prevent skin breakdown. Bathing also provides a sense of well-being and relaxation. Complete bed baths are usually given 2-3 times a week. Frequent bathing may not be advisable for some people. Check with the doctor or nurse about how often to give a complete bath.

17. Partial Bath: Used between complete baths. Includes face and hands, underarms, back and the genital area.

18. No Rinse Soap/Shampoo: Eliminates the need for rinsing when bathing or shampooing hair.

19. Clean to dirty: When bathing, body parts should be washed moving from the cleanest area and finishing with the most dirty area.

20. Thin Fragile Skin: Avoid rubbing when washing, rinsing, or drying the skin. Apply lotion by patting it on.

21. Incontinent Pad: A square disposable pad that comes in different sizes and is covered with plastic on one side. Used to protect the mattress and sheets. Helps to reduce laundry.



- 22. Bath Thermometer:** Use a thermometer to check water temperature to avoid accidental chilling or scalding. You can purchase a thermometer at pool supply stores.
- 23. Washing Soiled Laundry:** Wash soiled laundry in hot water with a cup of chlorine bleach or Lysol added to the wash water. Wash separately from family laundry.
- 24. Bed cradle:** A device that helps to keep the covers off the body.
- 25. Night foot splint:** An appliance that helps to keep the calf muscles from tightening.
- 26. Dressing a weak or paralyzed arm or leg:** Always dress the injured, paralyzed or weak arm or leg first and undress it last. The garment is most flexible at those times.
- 27. Blood Clots:** Persons on bedrest have increased risk of blood clots. Massaging the legs can dislodge clots and should be avoided.
- 28. Shaving:** Keep the skin taut and shave down in the direction that the hair grows.
- 29. Oxygen:** Never use electrical appliances when oxygen is in use as sparks from the appliance could cause a fire.
- 30. Preventing pressure ulcers:** Pressure ulcers are caused when unrelieved pressure damages underlying tissue. Never massage reddened or irritated areas, as these could indicate a pressure ulcer. Turning the person every 2 hours and increasing circulation as a result of bathing can help to prevent pressure ulcers. To help prevent pressure ulcers on the heels of the feet, it is best to float the heels by placing a pillow from the knee to the ankle with the heels suspended off the bed.
- 31. Podiatrist:** Specialist in foot disorders and nail care.



Test Your Understanding of Personal Care

Name _____ Date ____/____/____

1. The single most effective way to prevent the spread of germs is:
 - A. Washing all surfaces regularly with Chlorine or Lysol.
 - B. Wearing disposable gloves when providing personal care.
 - C. Proper handwashing.
 - D. Avoiding handling body fluid or contaminated equipment.

2. When providing personal care:
 - A. A positive attitude is the most important quality.
 - B. Perform tasks yourself because you are the one trained in the correct procedures.
 - C. Respect the person's preferences and privacy.
 - D. All of the above.

3. Which of the following is the proper beginning sequence when giving a bed bath:
 - A. Buttocks, genitals, arms and legs.
 - B. Eyes, face, ears and neck.
 - C. Arms, legs, chest and back.
 - D. Face, ears, neck and arms.

4. When giving a bed bath, it is necessary to change the water:
 - A. When it is no longer warm.
 - B. After cleaning the legs and feet.
 - C. Whenever the water becomes dirty or too soapy.
 - D. All of the above.

5. When providing personal care, the environment should:
 - A. Imitate a hospital setting.
 - B. Be in the bedroom.
 - C. Be warm and free from drafts.
 - D. Be secluded and private.

6. In order to prevent pressure ulcers:
 - A. Change the person's position in bed every 4 hours.
 - B. Bathe the person daily.
 - C. Change the person's position in bed every 2 hours.
 - D. Apply salve to reddened areas.



7. When providing nail care, it's important to:
- A. Check the fingers and toes weekly.
 - B. Wear gloves.
 - C. Soak the hand or foot first.
 - D. All of the above.
8. When shaving someone, always:
- A. Shave in the same direction that the hair grows.
 - B. Keep the skin loose and flexible.
 - C. Shave the chin bringing the razor from the chin to the neck.
 - D. Use long, even strokes.
9. When giving a bed bath, it is important to support the limbs at the joints.
- _____ True _____ False
10. Washing from the dirtiest areas of the body to the cleanest areas helps reduce the spread of germs.
- _____ True _____ False
11. Bath time is an excellent time to observe the skin for redness: a warning sign of a pressure ulcer.
- _____ True _____ False
12. When dressing a person, dress the weak limb last and undress it first.
- _____ True _____ False
13. When lifting, always keep your feet close together.
- _____ True _____ False
14. It is important to rub lotion on thin fragile skin in order to keep it moisturized.
- _____ True _____ False
15. A bed cradle gently rocks the person to sleep.
- _____ True _____ False



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- 26. Dressing a weak or paralyzed arm or leg:** Always dress the injured, paralyzed or weak arm or leg first and undress it last. The garment is most flexible at those times.
- 27. Blood Clots:** Persons on bedrest have increased risk of blood clots. Massaging the legs can dislodge clots and should be avoided.
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 - C. Respect the person's preferences and privacy.
 - D. All of the above.

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