

Bed Bath/Tub Bathing

Purposes of Bathing

Cleanse the skin. Bathing removes dirt, perspiration, sebum, some bacteria, and slough off dead skin cells. It helps to prevent irritations and rashes that would otherwise transform into infections.

Stimulate blood circulation. Good circulation is promoted through the use of warm water and gentle stroking of the extremities. The person feels revitalized and relaxed through the washing process.

Improved self-image. Bathing promotes relaxation and a feeling of being refreshed and comfortable. It helps the person to maintain an acceptable social standard of cleanliness, both appearance and olfactory.

Reduce body odors. Excessive secretion of sweat causes unpleasant body odors. Bathing and use of antiperspirants minimizes odors.

Promote range of motion exercises. Movement of the upper and lower extremities during bathing maintains joint function.

Items Required for Bed Bath

- ▶ Essential toiletries (e.g., talcum powder, mouth gargle, nail clipper)
- ▶ Basin with warm water (temperature adjusted to patient's comfort)
- ▶ Wash towels for cleansing the body
- ▶ Toilet paper
- ▶ Bath towel
- ▶ Face towel
- ▶ Bed linen as required
- ▶ Clean clothes
- ▶ Disposable brief (optional)

Giving a Bed Bath

A person who cannot get out of bed or may need to have his bathroom needs attended in bed. Bed bath should be performed at least once a day. Find out the person's preferences for bathing practices, such as frequency of bathing, time of day bathing preferred, and type of hygiene products used.

Tips on Giving a Bed Bathing:

- ▶ Make sure that the fan or air-con is switched-off to prevent the person from catching chills. Remember to provide privacy, close door and window covers.
- ▶ Offer a urinal or bedpan, if required, before bed bathing to minimize disruption during the process. Also, warm water may stimulate the urge to pass urine.
- ▶ Prepare all the items you need and bring them to the bedside so that they are within reach to avoid unnecessary disruptions during the bath.
- ▶ Be comforting. Don't rush through the procedure!
- ▶ Be sure the water temperature is not extreme.
- ▶ Allow your loved one to participate as much as his condition allows.
- ▶ Expose only the areas to be cleansed to preserve modesty. For example, cover top half of body while washing legs.

- ▶ To reduce embarrassment, talk to them throughout the bath.
- ▶ Start with the cleanest areas of the body and finish with areas that are less clean. Begin by washing and drying the face, then the neck and ears, then the chest and arms.
- ▶ Change water as often as necessary.
- ▶ Continue with the lower part of the chest, abdomen and sides of the body, followed by the umbilicus and lower limbs.
- ▶ The loved one is then turned and their back thoroughly washed and dried.
- ▶ Tidy the bed at the same time when the person is turned on their side for you to clean their back. Remake the bed with clean linen, if necessary.
- ▶ Wash the groins and genitalia region with moist cotton wool. If possible, and they are well enough, they should do this for himself.
- ▶ Always wash and dry the areas immediately. Pay special attention to the skin folds, particularly those beneath the breasts, in the groin and between the buttocks and between the toes.
- ▶ Be sure to pat them dry, and remember that rubbing can be harsh for sensitive skin.
- ▶ Take this opportunity to assess the skin condition. Take note of any redness or broken skin.
- ▶ Take this opportunity to massage pressure areas with firm circular movements to promote circulation.
- ▶ Apply skin lotion to keep skin soft and supple. Excessive use of talcum powder should be avoided as it can cause the skin to be dry and itchy. This can lead to skin infection.

Self-Wash in Bed

This procedure is required if your loved one is unable to get out of bed but is capable of washing themselves.

- ▶ Make sure they have privacy and the room is kept warm.
- ▶ Explain the procedure and offer a bedpan or urinal before you begin as warm water may stimulate the urge to pass urine.
- ▶ Close the door and draw the curtains to ensure privacy.
- ▶ Provide a basin with three-quarters full of warm water. Collect all the washing equipment and put them on the bed table so that they are within reach.
- ▶ Undress our loved one, if they need help, and make sure he is covered by a sheet or blanket.
- ▶ Allow the person to wash in private. Ask them to wash the genitalia last and to ask for help when they are ready to wash the back.
- ▶ Change the water as often as required.
- ▶ Ask the person to turn to his side for you to clean the back if required. Place a towel under the back. Wash, rinse and dry the back. Turn the person to complete cleansing the other side. Repeat for the buttock. If the person is breathless, clean his back while he sits upright and leaned forward.
- ▶ If they can manage to wash his own anal region, hand them the disposable wipes soaked in soap and water and put a plastic bag within their reach for disposing the used wipes. Make sure that the anal region is properly rinse and dry.
- ▶ Help them dress and comb his hair, if necessary.
- ▶ Replace the bed table and place all the equipment required for mouth care and facial shaving (or make-up for woman) within reach. Assist them if necessary.
- ▶ Wash your hands and re-open any windows that you closed. Make sure your loved one is comfortable.

Note: Bed making is performed at the same time for a loved one who cannot get out of bed. While they are turned on their side for you to clean their back, replace and tidy the bottom linen on one side. Do the same thing when they turn over to the other side. Remake the bed with clean linen, if necessary.

Bathing in the Bathroom

A person who can go to the bathroom should be encouraged to have their usual bath with your assistance, if necessary. If you are doubtful about getting the person into the bathroom, consult your healthcare staff first. Your loved one may be worried about having a bath, particularly if they have recently undergone surgery and have a wound. You can help to allay any fears by being sympathetic and understanding. Certainly, your loved one will feel refreshed and much better after a bath.

Tips on Assisted Bathing in the Bathroom:

- ▶ Keep the bathroom warm to prevent the person becoming chilled.
- ▶ Always check with them if they need to go to the toilet before bathing.
- ▶ Assess the level of assistance they require. Some people may only need help in undressing, washing the back and feet (these areas may be too difficult for them to reach and clean), drying and dressing. You can always ask the staff if level of assistance has increased in this area.
- ▶ Fill tub per instructions for use in bathing room.
- ▶ The temperature of the water will be checked by the floating thermometer as tub fills and a hand sweep just before your loved one enters the tub. The water should be comfortably warm. Check with your loved one if the water temperature is comfortable to them. Staff will record the temperature on the temp log sheet in bathing room.
- ▶ If they are using a shower, provide them with a shower chair if they are less mobile. This enhances safety and also prevents them from becoming exhausted.
- ▶ For one who can help themselves, make sure that the toiletries and clean clothes are in the bathroom within easy reach. Provide them with washing aids, such as a long-handle brush, if necessary.