

Personal Hygiene and Grooming

Home Care Goals for Personal Hygiene and Grooming

Each patient must receive the necessary care and services to attain or maintain the highest practicable physical, mental, and psychosocial well-being.

The agency must assure that a patient's abilities in Personal Hygiene and Grooming do not diminish unless circumstances of the individual's clinical condition demonstrate that decline was unavoidable.

This includes the patient's ability to:

Bathe, dress, and groom / Transfer and ambulate / Toilet / Eat

Causes of Deficits in Personal Hygiene and Grooming

Cognitive Impairment

Weakness

Impaired vision

Impaired mobility

Lack of fine motor skills

Safety concerns

Lack of hygiene awareness

Assistance required may be:

Independent

Supervision

Set-up

Cueing

Breaking task into smaller segments

Interventions for Personal Hygiene and Grooming in General

Encourage patient to participate, and praise accomplishments

Assist only as necessary – encourage patient to do as much of task as he can

Organize and set-up to make task more manageable

Provide equipment within easy reach

Allow sufficient time

Break tasks down into manageable segments

Simplify steps, one at a time

Give choices, but limit choices (Not, "what do you want to eat?" Instead, "Do you want eggs or cereal for breakfast?")

Bathing

Deficit related to:

Inability to reach lower extremities, wash upper body

Inability to set up bath, regulate water flow and temperature

Able to bathe in shower or tub with the assistance of another person: (a) for intermittent supervision or encouragement or reminders, OR (b) to get in and out of the shower or tub, OR (c) for washing difficult to reach areas

Participates in bathing self in shower or tub, but requires presence of another person throughout the bath for assistance or supervision

Unable to use the shower or tub and is bathed in bed or bedside chair

Unable to effectively participate in bathing and is totally bathed by another person

Goals:

Patient will wash upper extremities

Patient will wash face and hands

Patient safety will be maintained

What are some safety precautions you take when bathing patients?

Interventions for Bathing:

Know patient's preferences: Tub or Shower, Bath Day and Shift

Respect dignity by maintaining privacy. Close curtains and doors. Make sure the patient is covered as much as possible

Make sure room temperature is comfortable and the bathroom is warmed up in advance

Prepare bathroom in advance with all supplies

Test water temperature before and during bathing

Patient may be afraid of water, so move slowly, use shallow water and/or bath seat, and maintain contact with patient

Let patient feel the water before shower or bath

Never leave a patient unattended in the bath or shower

Use assistive devices and safety equipment: bath benches, hand-held shower heads, bath bars, non-slip devices

Dry patient's skin thoroughly – it's better to pat dry rather than rub

Apply lotion to dry skin

Dressing and Grooming

Deficit related to:

Unable to make appropriate choices of attire

Impaired ability to put on / take off clothing

Unable to reach upper / lower extremities

Able to dress lower body without assistance if clothing and shoes are laid out or handed to the patient

Someone must help the patient put on undergarments, fasteners, slacks, socks or nylons, and shoes

Patient depends entirely upon another person to dress upper / lower body

Goals:

Patient will assist with dressing by raising arms/legs

Patient will demonstrate ability to dress upper body

What are some techniques you use to make dressing patients easier?

Interventions:

Limit the number of clothing choices

Lay items on the bed in the order that they should be put on

Keep only a few outfits in the closet at a time, and store away off-season clothing

Select easy-to-wear clothing: larger neck openings and front fastenings or no fastenings

Avoid tight-fitting clothes, zippers, hooks and eyes, buttons - Replace buttons with Velcro

Avoid "over the head" items to decrease anxiety

Use well-fitting slip-on shoes or shoes with Velcro fastenings

Front-opening bras are easier to manage than back-opening

Report to family and/or charge nurse garments that are torn, stained, or that do not fit

Hair Care

Many of our patients have regular appointments with a hairdresser. I can't stress to you how important this is to our patients. Know what the schedule is for the patient, and make sure she gets to her appointments. Know her preferences about hair care between her appointments.

Hair should always be clean and neat

Keep the patient's brush and comb clean

All patients must be clean-shaved at all times

Hand Care

Hand washing is just as important for patients as it is for staff members. Remind or assist the patient to wash hands after using the toilet and before eating.

Nails must be clean and trimmed at all times

How can you assist patients with dental care?

Dental Care

Brush teeth or dentures after each meal and floss daily

Remove and clean dentures every night, and brush the person's gums and roof of the mouth

Provide short, simple instructions. "Brush your teeth" may be too difficult. Instead try: "hold your toothbrush," "put paste on the brush" and "brush your top teeth," etc.

Remember, we want to give each patient the assistance he needs, but encourage and support as much independence in Personal Hygiene and Grooming as possible.