

Personal Care – Washing Body



Water Safety:

- Can the person be left alone in the bathroom?
- Do they experience seizures?
- The temperature of water this should not exceed 41c– safe temperature for that person –use a thermometer.

Sharp or Hot objects:

- Is it safe to leave them with sharp or hot objects?
- Do they understand the risks?
- Are they prone to risk taking behaviour?

Providing a bed bath

- If possible, raise the bed up to the height of the smallest support worker's hip.
- Expose the parts of their body that are about to be washed, to ensure their dignity, keep the rest of their body covered and warm.
- When washing with 2 staff, each member of staff should wash & dry the limbs closest to them & not lean across the person.
- Support their limbs as comfortably as possible.
- Lift their limbs from underneath, to maximize comfort & avoid the risk of injury to their skin.
- If using a bar of soap, ensure the soap is not dried out & cracked or ingrained with grime. Make sure the soap is not soft & mushy. Ideally use liquid soap or body wash or a prescribed emollient.
- Always consider the temperature of the water throughout the wash and change when it has become cool or too soapy.

Washing the Face:

- Offer them a choice, but you usually begin by washing their face – using their choice of cleanser. Do not vigorously rub the face, this is likely to cause injury - particularly to their eyes. Ensure you do not get cleanser/water in their eyes, nose or mouth.
- Use the corner of a clean cloth with some warm water, to wipe their eye and remove debris – start next to their nose and work outwards. Use a separate part of the clean cloth to clean the other eye.
- Ensure you also wipe the outer parts of their ears, to remove any debris from their ear.
- Never poke any items into ear canal.
- Pat the face dry & apply any moisturizer or prescribed medication to the face.



Washing Arms & Armpits:

- Expose the 1st arm and place a towel under it, start at the hand and wash upwards towards their shoulder & include washing their arm pit.
- Ensure that you have some lather when washing & use a separate sponge or flannel to wipe the lather off the skin.
- Moderate pressure should be used to wash, it should not feel ticklish or rough.
- Take time to dry their skin, be aware of delicate skin. Ensure you dry carefully around their hands and creases in their body, which can become irritated & develop infections, if not thoroughly dried.
- If needed, pat skin dry as the skin could be delicate.
- Use any creams/lotions or moisturiser or prescribed medication, as desired by the Service User.
- Repeat the process on other side.
- Expose and repeat the above process for their trunk & roll onto their side, so that you can wash their back.

Legs and Feet:

- Expose the 1st leg and place a towel under it, start at the feet and wash upwards towards their upper leg.
- Ensure that you have some lather when washing, then use a separate sponge or flannel to wipe the lather off their skin.
- Moderate pressure should be used to wash, it should not feel ticklish or rough, although some people cannot tolerate having their feet touched.
- Take time to dry their skin, be aware of delicate skin. Ensure you dry carefully around their feet and between their toes which can become irritated or can develop infections, if not thoroughly dried.
- Apply creams/lotions/moisturiser or prescribed medication, as desired by the Service User.
- Repeat the process on the other side

Washing Intimate Area's – genitals:

- Prepare to wash their genitals (between the legs)
- Have a bag prepared to place soiled continence aids, waste & used tissue or wipes
- Place a towel or pad under their bottom, to protect bedding / clothing
- Use soap or shower gel to wash, but some may use specific cleaning products
- Prepare by having several cloths or wipes available to wash this area, as they may have been incontinent
- If they have been incontinent – use tissue or wipes to mop up excess and place these in the bag & remove their continence pad & place this in the waste bag
- Be aware of the person's privacy and dignity and ensure they are as covered up as possible
- It's important that this area of their body is thoroughly washed and dried, due to the risk of skin irritation, particularly if they are incontinent or in skin folds and creases
- It can be helpful to have them lying down and to ask them to raise their knees up, with their feet flat on the bed to help you thoroughly wash them
- Observe their skin for signs or irritation or skin breakdown, particularly in the creases of their skin

Support to Wash Female genitals: Labia:

- Ensure that this area is thoroughly cleaned in the creases, you may need to use several cloths to ensure this is thoroughly washed
- This area should then be gently patted dry and if required it may be necessary to sparingly, apply barrier cream or film to prevent dermatitis caused by incontinence.
- **Always wipe from the front to the back (towards their anus)**

Support to Wash Male genitals: Foreskin:

- Some males have a foreskin, this is a thin layer of skin that covers the tip of the penis
- When washing a male who has a foreskin, it is important that you gently pull back the foreskin, by pulling the skin down towards the base of the penis – it retracts about 1-3 cm approx
- Gently wash the area and pat this dry and then pull the foreskin back up over the tip of the penis. It is important that you do not leave the foreskin retracted, as this can cause irritation

Prescribed treatments:

- Apply creams and ointments, as prescribed and ensure the appropriate continence aids are used & ensure regular cleaning of the area, using specialist cleaning products where prescribed

Washing at the sink:

- Ensure the Service User is sitting comfortably or standing, whichever is most appropriate
- Give prompts & encouragement when attending to their personal care
- Provide assistance or support with areas that they find difficult to reach
- Prompt them to start washing their face & top half of their body, then move down to their feet and legs and then wash their genitals
- **When washing the genitals, ensure you start washing the front and work towards the back and where possible use a separate washcloth, from those used to wash their body.**

Washing in the Shower / Bath:

- Keep yourself as dry as possible and consider both the & your position in the shower, to prevent you & the room being covered in water.
- If the Service User is walking into a shower cubicle – you may need to position them in the shower and then run the water over your hand & away from their body, to gauge the temperature and prevent cold or very hot water spraying on them.

