

Chapter 12

PERSONAL CARE FOR THE CLIENT

What You Will Learn

- Activities that make up personal care
- Things to think about when planning personal care
- How to help clients to maintain general hygiene
- Helping with personal care
- Things to remember when giving personal care
- Adaptive measures that may be needed when giving personal care to clients with special conditions
- How to shave a client with a disposable or safety razor according to proper procedure
- How to shave a client with electric razor according to proper procedure

Activities That Make Up Personal Care

Personal care includes many different activities. Bathing, oral hygiene, hair care, nail care, and dressing are done each day. Shaving may be completed by male clients and some female clients.

Planning Personal Care

When planning a client's personal care you will need to know some basic information. Check the client's service plan for special instructions. You will need to know what your assigned clients are capable of doing.

Encourage the client to do as much as possible. Don't try to save time by doing personal care that the client is capable of doing. This can result in dependency. The client should have as much control as possible over when and how personal care is conducted. For example, asking the client what he would like to wear.

Remember you are invading the client's personal space and are a guest in his home. Treat the client with respect while assisting him. The client is not a child and cannot be treated as one.

General Hygiene

Good hygiene is important to your client. It helps him to maintain a positive self-image and supports good health. Elderly or ill clients may need extra help with their personal hygiene. Activities take more effort and energy so personal hygiene may be neglected. Eyesight often becomes less sharp so clothing may be soiled and shirts may not be properly buttoned. Hands may tremble so hair may be unkempt or food may be spilled on clothing.

Helping with Personal Care

Bathing is an important part of personal care. The client who is able to be up and out of bed may take a tub bath, sponge bath or shower. Clients who are very ill or are confined to bed may be given a bed bath. Taking a tub or shower bath once or twice a week may be sufficient for older clients. The skin in elderly people becomes thinner and dryer. Some clients may prefer daily baths.

A partial or sponge bath involves washing the face, hands axilla, and perineal area. Partial baths can be given more frequently or on days that the client does not take a tub bath or shower. Remember to assist the client to wash his hands after using the toilet and before meals and as needed.

A bed can be made with the client in it (occupied), or when the client is out of bed (unoccupied). It is much easier to make an unoccupied bed. Bed linens should be changed whenever they are soiled or as requested by the client or family. Bed linens are usually changed each week.

Oral hygiene is also called mouth care. Offer the client oral care before breakfast, after meals, and also at bedtime. Inspect client's mouth and report anything unusual. When dentures are out of the client's mouth, safely store them in a denture cup filled with cool water.

Most men shave their beard every day. Shaving is a good exercise; let your clients shave themselves if they are able to. Electric razors are the safest and should be used on clients with diabetes and those receiving anticoagulants (blood thinners). Many females have facial hair and may request shaving. If females ask you to shave their legs and underarms, refer to the service plan. Report to your nurse/supervisor if a female client requests that facial hair be plucked or waxed. Always apply lather or shaving cream before shaving with a disposable razor. This helps to soften the beard and



prevents skin irritation. For a comfortable and easy shave, remember to shave in the direction that hair grows, downward over the checks and chin, upward over the neck area. If you cut the skin while shaving, apply pressure with a gloved hand over the cut using a clean cloth for a minute or so until oozing stops. Notify the nurse/supervisor. Electric razors should not be used on a client receiving oxygen because there is a danger that a spark could cause a fire. When shaving with an electric razor remember that electrical cords should not come into contact with water.

When giving skin care, inspect the skin for bruises, rashes, scratches, and broken and red areas. Report skin problems immediately if observed. Apply lotion to the client's back and feet. Most clients enjoy a relaxing back rub. If the client has dry skin, you may need to apply lotion to the entire body. Avoid getting lotion between the toes. Moisture between the toes may lead to bacterial or fungal infection.

Providing hair care for the client is another way of helping the client feel good about himself. It also helps stimulate the client's scalp. Brush the hair gently from the scalp to ends. If the hair is tangled or knotted, separate the tangle from the rest of the hair. Hold the hair gently above the tangle and brush or comb the tangle out working from the end towards the scalp. When giving hair care, look for sores, dandruff, lice, and nits. Let the client care for his own hair if possible. Shampooing should be done once a week or more often if necessary or requested.

Dirt that has collected under nails is a source of infection. Clean nails daily and keep them short to prevent scratches. Soak nails in warm water for a few minutes before cutting them. NEVER cut the toenails of a person who has diabetes or is on a "blood thinning" medication (i.e., Coumadin or Plavix). Report to the nurse/supervisor if nails need cutting. Trim toenails straight across.

Clients need day clothes and night clothes. This also helps remind the client who is confused about time. When your client is dressed in regular clothing during the day, he will usually feel better. Encourage the client to select clothing appropriate for the type of weather and activity that he will be participating in that day. Layer lightweight clothing for warmth that allows the client to add or remove layers as he wishes. Respect the client's color preference. When possible, match colors appropriately so that he has a neat appearance. Even if the client selects clothing that doesn't match, remember that he has the right to dress as he desires.

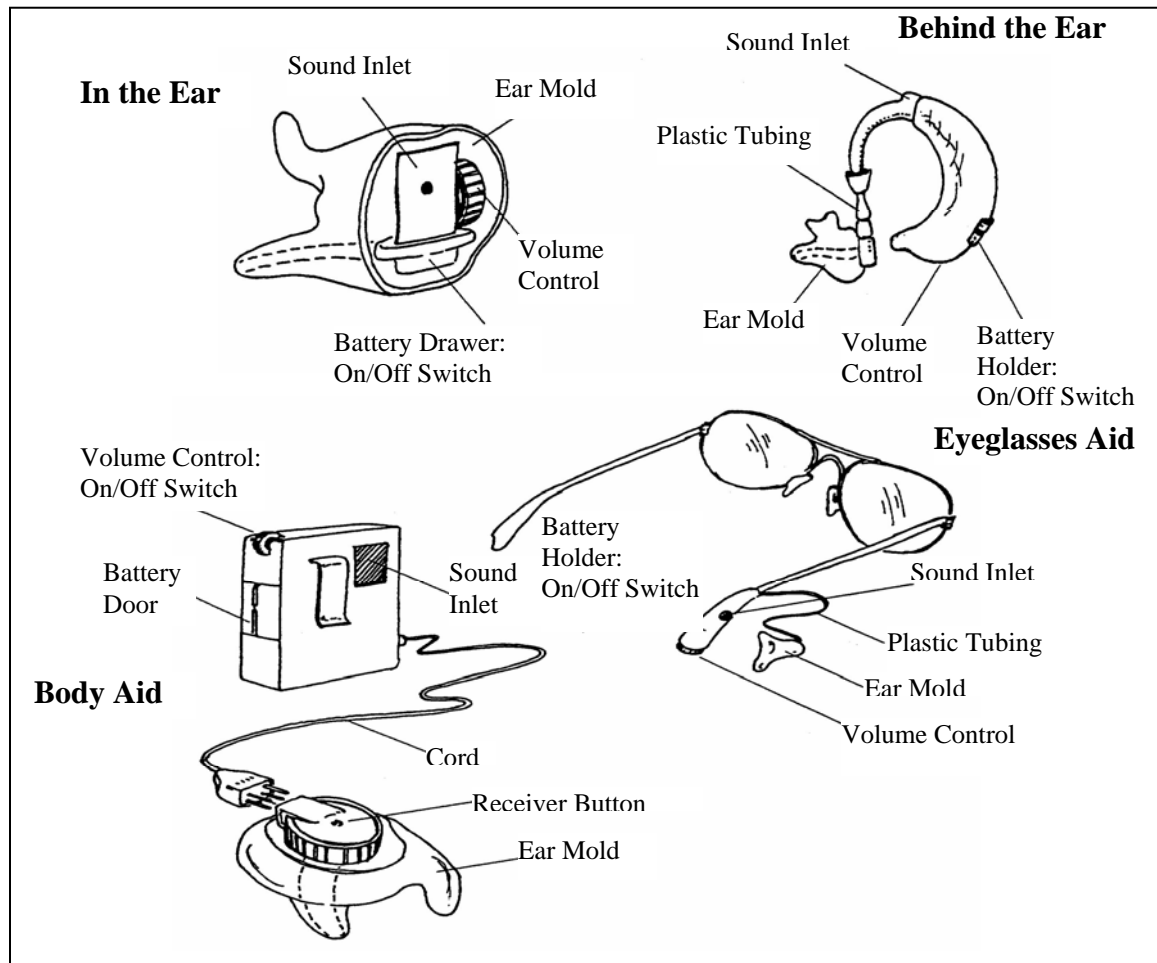
Shoes and stockings or socks should fit. Round garters and stockings or socks that roll, twist, or have tight elastic can cause poor circulation. Underclothes should provide support but should be the client's choice. For example, some men prefer boxer shorts and others prefer briefs. Some women prefer bras; others prefer undershirts, camisoles, or whole slips.

Safety is always a concern. Clothing that is too long or shoes that are untied can cause the client to fall. Pay attention to safety when helping your client with dressing and grooming.

Many clients wear hearing aids (see Figure 12.1). Hearing aids should always be handled carefully and should not be allowed to get wet. When the aid is not in use, it should be in the off position and stored in a box or hearing aid case. Before giving a hearing aid to the client to place in his ear, check to verify that the batteries are functioning properly. If needed, assist the client in adjusting the volume of the hearing aid.

Many clients wear eyeglasses. Clean eyeglasses daily and as needed with cleaning solution or water. Eyeglasses should be dried with a clean, soft cloth. Handle eyeglasses only by the frames. When eyeglasses are not in use, they should be placed in an eyeglass case.

Figure 12.1: Types of Hearing Aids



Things to Remember When Performing Personal Care

- Wash your hands before and after a procedure and put on gloves as needed.
- Gather all equipment needed before starting a procedure.
- Give a thorough explanation of what you are going to do.
- Respect client's privacy by closing the door.
- Allow the client to perform any part of the procedure he is able to do. Inability to perform personal care means a loss of independence for the client.
- Use good body mechanics. Bend at the knees and use arm and leg muscles.
- Remember safety factors. Prevent falls by using a nonskid mat in the tub or shower and keeping the client's shoes on during transfer.
- Prevent burns. Always check temperature of water with the inside of your forearm or wrist before using on the client. Water temperature should be between 95° and 105° Fahrenheit because higher temperature could result in a burn.
- Lock the wheels on geri-chairs, and wheel chairs when not being used to move client.
- Provide warmth by keeping the client covered with a towel or sheet before and after bath.

- The elderly are more prone to chilling due to poor circulation. Keep the bathroom door closed to conserve heat and avoid drafts.
- Make observations during personal care. Pay attention to what you see, smell, hear and feel.

Adaptive Measures for Special Conditions

Some clients have special needs. For example, the client who is unconscious cannot respond but still needs to be given an explanation. He may be able to hear and understand even though he cannot respond. To prevent choking or aspiration of fluid into the lungs during oral care, turn the unconscious client to one side.

When caring for a client who is paralyzed, handle the affected side with care and support the client's joints. Use the terms "weak" or "paralyzed," "strong" or "un-paralyzed" side when giving care; never use the terms "bad" or "good" side. Do not leave a client lying on the affected side longer than two hours (or per service plan); this may cause pressure ulcers. Maintain proper positioning for good circulation. When dressing a client with paralysis or weakness, dress the affected side first. Check frequently for incontinence at least every two hours or as indicated in the service plan and clean when needed.

Clients with diabetes need good skin care. Observe the skin for breakdown or tears and report to the nurse/supervisor. Feet and legs are susceptible to poor circulation. Tight shoes may also cause reduced circulation. Protect the legs and feet from trauma during transfers. NEVER trim the toenails of a client who has diabetes. If the skin is nicked, it may become infected and can lead to gangrene (tissue death) and eventual amputation. Follow your in-home provider's policy regarding fingernail care for the client who has diabetes. The wounds of a client who has diabetes are more prone to infection and heal more slowly due to poor circulation. Some wounds may not heal at all.

You will spend many hours performing personal care. Remember, the In-Home Aide is with the client more than anyone else on the health care team. Make good observations and meet the client's emotional needs during the time spent with them. Do not concentrate only on the physical aspects of the care.

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PERSONAL CARE FOR THE CLIENT

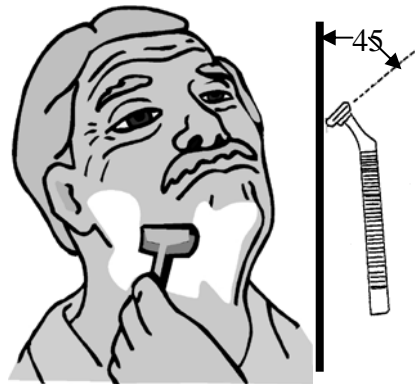
PROCEDURE FOR SHAVING CLIENT WITH DISPOSABLE OR SAFETY RAZOR:

1. Gather necessary equipment.
2. Wash your hands. Put on gloves.
3. Explain what you are going to do.
4. Position client in chair or sitting position in bed in well-lit private area such as the bedroom or bathroom.
5. Spread towel under client's chin.
6. Wet face with warm water.

NOTE: WARM WATER SOFTENS THE BEARD AND MAKES SHAVING SMOOTHER.

7. Apply shaving cream 1/8 inch thick to face.
8. Leave lather in place about 15-20 seconds.
9. Hold razor at a 45° angle to the client's skin. Start stroking downward with razor under sideburns and work downward over the cheek. Shave in the same direction that the hair grows (Figure 12.2).

Figure 12.2, Shaving with a Disposable Razor



10. Continue over the chin. Work upward on neck under the chin. Use short, firm strokes.
11. Rinse the razor often in water.
12. Shave area around lips carefully.

NOTE: YOU MAY HAVE TO STRETCH SKIN GENTLY TO SHAVE IN CREASES AND SENSITIVE AREAS.

13. When finished shaving, wash the face of any excess soap or lather.
14. Pat the face dry with a towel.

15. Apply aftershave lotion if the client requests it or if it is part of his usual routine.
16. Remove, clean, and store equipment. Do not recap disposable razor.
17. Remove and dispose of gloves according to in-home provider's policy. Wash hands.
18. Record observations and report anything unusual to nurse/supervisor.

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PROCEDURE FOR SHAVING CLIENT WITH ELECTRIC RAZOR:

1. Gather necessary equipment.
2. Wash your hands. Put on gloves.
3. Explain what you are going to do.
4. Provide privacy.
5. Position client in chair or sitting position in bed in well-lit private area such as the bedroom or bathroom.
6. Spread towel under client's chin.
7. Wash face thoroughly with soap and water to remove dirt and oil; pat dry.
8. Apply pre-shave lotion if client requests it or if it is part of his usual routine.
9. Start shaving from sideburns, holding skin tight and using circular motions, shave neck and around mouth.
10. When finished, apply aftershave lotion if client requests it or if it is part of his usual routine.
11. Clean razor according to manufacturer's directions or instructions from client or family.
12. Remove, clean, and store equipment.
13. Remove and dispose of gloves. Wash hands.
14. Record observations and report anything unusual to nurse/supervisor.

Chapter Review

1. What activities make up personal care?
2. What do you need to think about when planning personal care?
3. How can you help clients have good general hygiene?
4. How can you help with personal care?
5. What things do you need to remember when giving personal care?
6. What adaptive measures may be necessary when giving personal care to clients with special conditions?
7. How do you shave a client with a disposable or safety razor according to proper procedure?
8. How do you shave a client with electric razor according to proper procedure?

Student Exercise

Complete the following short-answer questions.

1. List the six activities that make up personal care.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.
 - f.

2. List four key points in planning personal care for the client.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.

3. List two reasons for general hygiene.
 - a.
 - b.

4. List three special conditions for which adaptive measures are necessary.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

Circle the letter that corresponds to the correct answer.

5. Key factors in choosing clothing for a client include:
 - a. the weather and client's color preference
 - b. convenience and In-Home Aide's preference
 - c. availability and colors that match
 - d. latest style and dark colors

6. Which of the following are points to remember when performing personal care?
 - a. Do not allow the client to assist in the procedure
 - b. Get the equipment needed after starting the procedure
 - c. Wash your hands before and after a procedure
 - d. Personal care should only be provided by a licensed nurse

7. Shaving should be performed in the _____.
 - a. kitchen
 - b. living room
 - c. client's bedroom/bathroom
 - d. dining room