

COMPASSIONATE CARE 101

Providing hygiene and personal care for a loved one at home
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HYGIENE AND PERSONAL CARE

Personal Hygiene

Grooming is a vital part of the day; if you are clean and look good, you feel good. On occasion, we are unable to perform our daily hygiene, such as brushing our teeth, bathing, and shampooing, skin, nail, and foot care. There are many reasons one would not to be able to care for themselves, including the following:

Illness
Pain
No energy or strength
Inability to reach
Anxiety
Fear of getting hurt
Confusion
Forgetting how to perform the task

Remember to encourage the patient to assist as much as possible according to their abilities and limitations. Give the patient as much privacy as possible. Establish a communication system so that the patient can call you.

Cleaning the Mouth

Cleaning the mouth, teeth, gums, and tongue is good to prevent tooth decay, gum disease, and foul mouth odor. Brushing your teeth gives your whole mouth a clean and refreshing feeling. A clean and healthy mouth is very important for good oral hygiene.

Always be observant of the patient's mouth. Check the mouth, teeth, gums, and lips for any irritation or sores. Maintain oral hygiene in the morning, after meals, and at bedtime.

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Flossing

Flossing between the teeth helps to remove food and other things that will cause decay, gum disease, and bad breath. Flossing is done before brushing, and usually after every meal.

Flossing Teeth Procedure

Materials Needed

Disposable gloves
Waxed dental floss
Glass of water
Plastic bowl
Hand towel
Paper towels

Procedure

1	Explain what you are doing.
2	Put the gloves on.
3	Make sure that the patient is in an upright position.
4	Place the hand towel under their chin and chest.
5	Take out 12-20 inches of floss.
6	Wrap the floss around the middle finger of both hands.
7	Start with the top teeth, inserting the floss between each tooth using an up, down, in and out motion. Then work your way down to the bottom teeth and follow the same procedure.
8	Have the patient rinse their mouth vigorously then spit into the plastic bowl.
9	Wipe the patient's mouth clean with the hand towel.

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10	Clean all supplies and work area then put away all supplies.
11	Wash your hands.



Brushing Teeth Procedure

Materials Needed

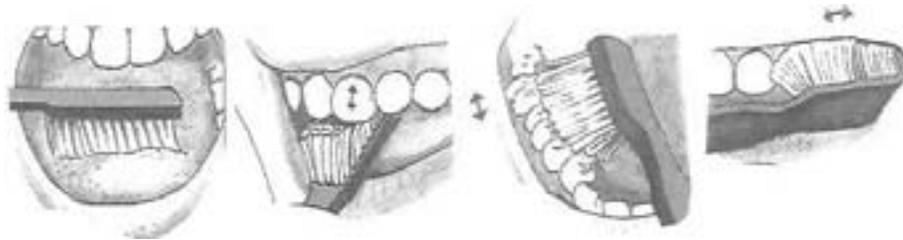
Soft-bristle toothbrush
Toothpaste
Glass of water
Mouthwash
Small plastic bowl
Hand towel
Disposable gloves

Procedure

1.	Explain what you are about to do.
2.	Gather your supplies.
3.	Provide privacy.
4.	Get patient in a comfortable position, either in the bed in a sitting position or in a chair.
5.	Place the hand towel under the chin.
6.	Put on the gloves.

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7.	Hold the toothbrush over the bowl, wet the toothbrush, and apply toothpaste.
8.	Brush the patient's teeth, if they are not able to do it themselves.
9.	Have patient rinse mouth vigorously several times with water.
10.	Follow with mouthwash.
11.	Wipe mouth area with hand towel.
12.	Clean supplies and put them away.
13.	Wash your hands.



Denture Care

Dentures are cleaned like regular teeth. They must be properly cleaned in the morning and at bedtime. Make sure to handle them carefully. They can break very easily. Hold them with a washcloth, as they are very slippery. Observe the condition of the patient's mouth. Check for any sores or cuts.



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Denture Care Procedure

Materials Needed

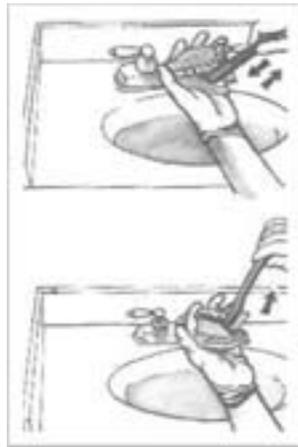
Soft-bristle toothbrush
Toothpaste
Gauze
Denture container
Glass of water
Mouthwash
Small plastic bowl
Hand towel
Disposable gloves

Procedure

1.	Explain what you are about to do.
2.	Gather your supplies.
3.	Provide privacy.
4.	Get patient in a comfortable position, either in the bed in a sitting position or in a chair.
5.	Place the hand towel under the chin.
6.	Put on the gloves.
7.	Ask the patient to remove their dentures and place them in the bowl. If you must remove the dentures yourself, grab them with the gauze (be careful, they will be slippery).
8.	Remove them as follow:
9.	Upper—Grab the denture between your thumb and index finger and move it up and down gently until you feel the suction release. Pull down and remove the dentures out of the mouth.
10.	Lower—Grab in the same manner and gently twist sideways and up, lifting the denture out of the mouth.
11.	Hold the dentures over the bowl or sink and brush the outside of the teeth from side to side and then up and down with warm water (hot water may

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	damage the dentures). Turn the dentures over and brush inside with an up-and-down movement. Finally, rinse the dentures with warm water.
12.	Have patient rinse mouth vigorously several times with water.
13.	Follow with mouthwash.
14.	Wipe mouth area with hand towel.
15.	Clean supplies and put away.
16.	Wash your hands.



Mouth Care for an Unconscious Patient

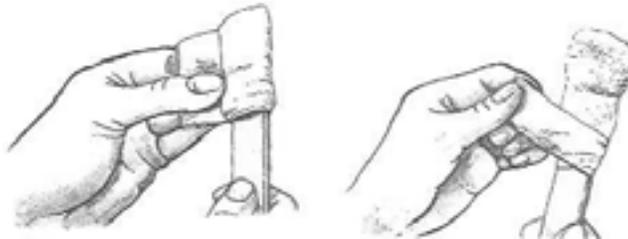
Unconscious patients require more frequent mouth care. Because they are unable to drink fluids or swallow frequently, saliva dries up and gets crusted, causing odor and bacterial growth.

Because the patient cannot swallow, there is a danger of choking or aspirating. When caring for the patient's mouth, place the patient on their side, so that the fluids may drain out of the mouth instead of down the throat.

Unconscious patients cannot hold their mouth open during cleaning. You will need to hold the mouth open by using a padded tongue depressor or a spoon wrapped in gauze. Do not use your fingers because the patient may bite you. Always wear gloves.

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You may use some type of glycerin swab to wipe out the mouth, and then use some type of Chap Stick to keep the lips moist.



Bathing

Bathing is a very important part of the healing process. When you are clean, you feel better mentally and physically. Bathing the body in warm soothing water is beneficial in many ways:

Cleaning the body
Preventing body odor

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Soothing aching muscles and joints
Stimulating circulation
Relaxing
Removing stress and tension

The frequency of the bath depends on many things. If the patient is active and can walk, they will need to bathe daily. If the patient is bedridden or unconscious, they may require a bed bath. And if the patients are incontinent, they will need to be bathed each time they soil themselves. All situations are different.

They are many products used for bathing. Always make sure to know if the patient is allergic to any products, before using. They are the following:

Soap	Used to cleanse the body. There are many different varieties, such as moisturizing, medicated, and scented ones. Most older adults prefer a soap that moisturizes the skin to keep it soft and supple.
Shampoo and conditioner	Used to cleanse the hair and scalp. Also comes in many different varieties, such as moisturizing, medicated, for limp hair, volumizing, etc.
Creams, lotions, and oils	Used to soften the skin. After bathing, it is helpful to apply these to keep the skin moisturized.
Powder	Used to soothe and cool the skin, prevent chafing of the skin, and to prevent friction between two skin surfaces. You must wait till the lotion dries before applying the powder; if not, it will cake and may cause irritation or infection.
Deodorant	Used to prevent body odor. There are roll-ons, sticks, or sprays, in a variety of scents.

Different Types of Baths

Complete Bed Bath

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This is given to patients who are unable to bathe themselves in the bathtub. Some circumstances may be if the patient is unable to get out of bed, unconscious, paralyzed, and wearing a cast on. Encourage patients to help with as much as possible. Provide lots of privacy, work quickly and efficiently, and always let the patient know what's going on at all times.

Partial Bath

We only wash the face, hands, underarms, back, buttocks, and genitals. This may be given in the bed or bathtub. This is only done if the patient is soiled or too weak to take a full bath.

Materials Needed

Bowl of warm water for washcloths
Bowl of warm water for soaking
Soap
Washcloth
Several large bath towels
Paper towel
Bath blanket
Clothing
Tooth brushing supplies
Personal-hygiene supplies
Hairbrush supplies
Disposable gloves

Procedure

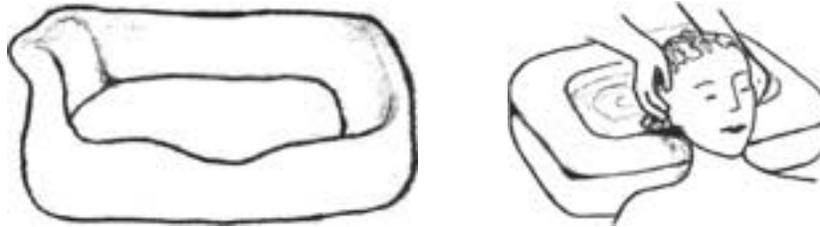
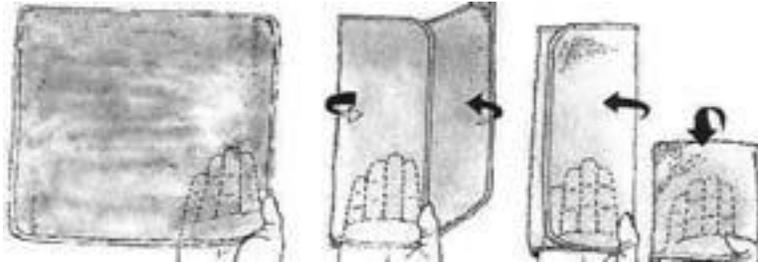
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1.	Wash and dry hands.
2.	Tell the patient what you are about to do.
3.	Make sure the patient is comfortable and has privacy.
4.	Take off top bedding.
5.	Assist patient with removing clothing.
6.	Cover patient with a bath blanket.
7.	Start with oral hygiene, floss and brush.
8.	Fill bowl with warm water.
9.	Place towel under patient's back, head, and over patient's chest.
10.	Have two washcloths: one with soap and one just wet and wrung out.
11.	Start with the cleanest to the dirtiest. Wash the entire face area with soapy washcloth then rinse off with wet washcloth.
12.	Wash, rinse, and dry the ears and neck.
13.	Place patient's hand into bowl of water; allow to soak. Then push back cuticles, and clean under nails with orangewood stick. Wash, rinse, and dry the arm, armpit, and hand. Apply deodorant on the underarm.
14.	Do the same to the other side.
15.	Wash, rinse, and dry the chest and abdomen.
16.	Change the water with fresh warm water.
17.	Put a large bath towel under patient's lower half.
18.	Move the bath blanket over the lower half of the patient's body.
19.	Put a large bath towel under patient's lower half.
20.	Bend patient's knee and put foot in bowl; allow it to soak. Wash and dry leg while foot is soaking. Clean under toenails, then wash and dry foot.
21.	Do the same to the other.
22.	Remove the towel from under the legs and place on the side of the arms.
23.	Turn patient on side: place the bath blanket to show back and buttocks.
24.	Wash, rinse, and dry neck, shoulders, back, and buttocks.
25.	Change the water with fresh warm water.
26.	Place towel under buttocks. Wash, rinse, and dry genital and rectal area.
27.	Make sure the patient is dry from top to bottom.
28.	Rub on lotion, and wait till dry to put on the baby powder.
29.	Help patient get dressed.
30.	Brush the patient's hair.
31.	Empty bowl, wipe up area with paper towels and throw them away. Put all dirty towels and washcloths into the laundry. Put away all supplies.
32.	Make sure patient is comfortable and safe.

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33.

Wash hands.



Shower or Tub Bath

A tub bath is only given if the patient can walk and is strong enough to assist. Some patients will prefer a shower to a tub. The tub bath is very relaxing and can cause the patient to become tired and weak, so work quickly. The bath should take no longer than 30 minutes.

Follow all safety rules when giving a tub or shower bath:

Always use proper body mechanics.

Always make sure to place a rubber mat in the tub.

Always make sure the floor is dry before and after the bath.

Always make sure the water is not too hot or cold.

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Materials Needed

Bath mat
Bathrobe
Soap
Washcloths
2 Bath towels
Bath chair (optional)
Clothing
Tooth brushing supplies
Personal-hygiene supplies
Hairbrush supplies
Disposable gloves

Procedure

1.	Wash and dry hands.
2.	Tell the patient what you are about to do.
3.	Obtain all materials before you bring the patient to the bathroom.
4.	Get the patient to floss and brush if needed.
5.	Place the bath mat into the bathtub or shower.
6.	Turn on the water and make sure it is not too hot or cold.
7.	Place the bath chair into the bathtub or shower.
8.	Assist the patient to undress and help them into the bathtub or shower.
9.	Fill tub up with water one-third of the way or turn the shower on.
10.	Assist patient with their bath or shower as needed.
11.	If needed, shampoo and condition hair.
12.	Soap up a washcloth. Start with the cleanest part of the body, preferably the face, and clean up to the dirtiest part of the body, preferably the genitals.
13.	Rinse all soap from body.
14.	Drain water from tub before getting the patient out of the tub.
15.	Assist the patient to dry off.

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16.	Rub on lotion, and wait till dry to put on the baby powder.
17.	Help patient get dressed.
18.	Brush the patient's hair.
19.	Put all dirty towels and washcloths into the laundry. Put away all supplies.
20.	Make sure patient is comfortable and safe.
21.	Wash hands.



Back Rub

The back rub involves applying lotion or massage oil to the patient's back in long, firm strokes from the buttocks to the neck. The back rub has several purposes:

Stimulates circulation
Provides relaxation and comfort
Prevents decubitus ulcers

Back rubs are given after the bath and at bedtimes. Lotion is used to prevent friction and to soften the skin. When giving the back rub, be sure to observe the back and buttocks for anything unusual.

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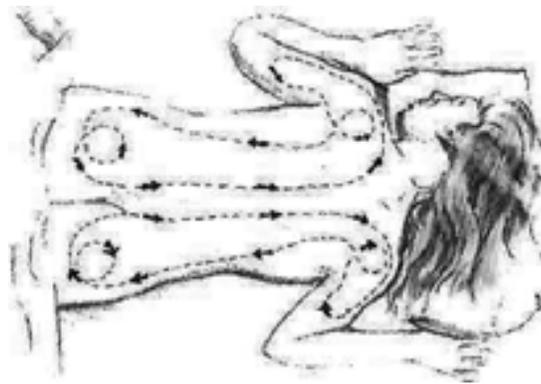
Materials Needed

Towel
Lotion or body oil

Procedure

1.	Wash and dry hands.
2.	Tell the patient what you are about to do.
3.	Obtain all materials.
4.	Provide privacy.
5.	Remove clothing from upper body.
6.	Put the patient on their stomach to show the whole back.
7.	Put a small amount of lotion or body oil on your hands. Rub hands together to warm lotion or oil.
8.	Use proper body mechanics.
9.	Start at the lower back, moving upward toward the neck. Apply pressure using palms of both hands. Use long, firm but gentle strokes—up, out, and down. Repeat several times.
10.	Wipe up excess lotion or oil.
11.	Assist patient to put on clothes.
12.	Reposition patient to where they are safe and comfortable.
13.	Wash hand.
14.	Clean and put away all supplies.

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Grooming

Maintaining Hands and Feet

Hands and feet need special attention to prevent infection, skin breakdown, odor, and injury. Hand and foot care can be given as part of the bath or separately as a manicure or pedicure. Always observe the condition of the skin and nails. Report the following conditions:

Sores, swelling, bruising, or reddened areas on the hands, feet, or between the fingers and toes
--

Changes in coloring of the skin and nails

Change in temperature of hands or feet, such as being hot or cold to touch
--

Cutting thick nails may cause the nail clipper to slip and accidentally cut the skin around the nail. This can be very serious for patients who heal very slowly or are prone to infection.

Manicure and Pedicure

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Materials Needed

Paper towels
Hand bowl
Foot bowl
Washcloth
Hand towel
2 bath towels
Nail clippers
Nail file
Orangewood stick (optional)
Pumice stone (optional)
Disposable gloves
Hand lotion

Procedure

1.	Explain what you are doing.
2.	Wash your hands.
3.	Obtain materials listed above.
4.	Spread bath towel on work area. Arrange materials on towel.
5.	Place the second towel on the floor for the feet.
6.	Fill both bowls with warm soapy water.
7.	Place the patient's hands and feet into the warm water and allow to soak for 10 minutes.
8.	Start with the hands. Clip fingernails to an appropriate length. Clean under fingernails with orangewood stick. Dry fingers.
9.	Shape fingernails with nail file. Push back cuticles gently with washcloth or orangewood stick. Apply lotion and massage from fingers to elbow.
10.	Remove foot from bowl one at a time. Smooth any calloused areas using washcloth or pumice stone. Cut and file toenails. Dry foot and area between the toes. Repeat procedure for the other foot. Apply lotion and massage from the foot to the knee.
11.	Reposition patient where they are safe and comfortable.
12.	Wash hands.

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13.

Clean and put all supplies away.



Hair Care

Some patients may not be able to do their own hair care. They will need help to brush, comb, wash, and style hair. Hair care is done to

clean the hair and scalp
stimulate circulation to the scalp
provide a sense of well-being and comfort
to look good, which then makes you feel good

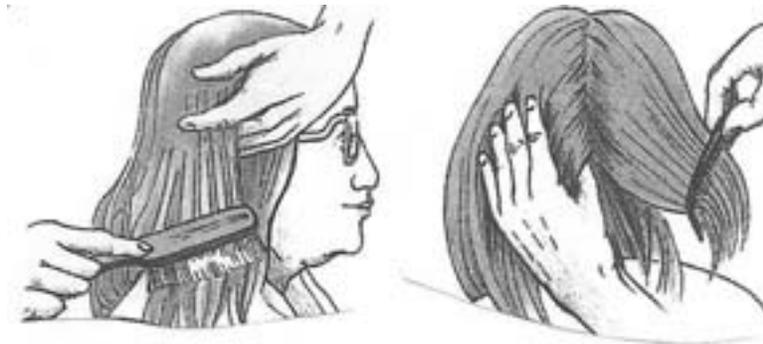
Brushing

Make sure the patient is comfortable. Part the hair, dividing it into at least four sections. Brush from root to end, one section at a time. Encourage patients to do as much of their own hair care as possible. This provides good exercise for the shoulders and upper arms.

Hair care is usually done twice daily, once in the morning and again at bedtime. Some hair care products may be used if the hair is dry or damaged. Observe the scalp for

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any scaling, crusting, irritation, bruises, bleeding, lumps, or large areas of missing hair.



Shampooing

Patients may wish to have their hair washed two or three times a week. Some people wash their hair daily. Hair can be washed in bed, at the sink, or as part of the bath. If you are giving a shampoo in the tub, wash the hair last so the patient does not have dripping wet hair while bathing. If you are shampooing at the sink, have the patient sit in a chair with their back to the sink. For a bed shampoo, you will need a plastic trough that drains the water away from the bed.

Giving a Shampoo

Materials Needed

Shampoo
Conditioner
Comb and brush
Bath towel
Washcloth (folded)
Handheld shower attachment
Blow-dryer

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For bed shampoo:

- Waterproof bed protector
- Trough
- Basin or bucket
- Pitcher of warm water

Procedure

1.	Explain what you are going to do.
2.	Wash your hands.
3.	Obtain materials listed above.
4.	Provide privacy.
5.	Position patient for shampoo.
6.	Comb or brush hair.
7.	Have patient hold folded washcloth over eyes to protect from shampoo.
8.	Wet hair, from front to back, with warm water.
9.	Put a small amount of shampoo in the palm of your hand.
10.	Apply shampoo to scalp; lather from front to back, rubbing gently.
11.	Rinse thoroughly with warm water.
12.	Apply the conditioner, the same way you did the shampoo.
13.	CAUTION: Conditioner can make the bottom of the tub slippery. Rinse all the conditioner down the drain before assisting the patient out of the tub or shower.
14.	Wrap the patient's head in a bath towel.
15.	Help the patient out of the tub, and assist with drying the body and hair.
16.	Dry the hair using the blow dryer. Fix the patient's hair as desired by the patient.
17.	Reposition patient where they are safe and comfortable.
18.	Wash hands.
19.	Clean and put all supplies away.

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Shaving

Men usually shave their beards daily. Women may shave their legs and underarms when necessary. Most patients will shave themselves.

Electric or blade razors may be used. Electric razors should not be used when the patient is receiving oxygen because there is danger that an electric spark could cause a fire. Blade razors should not be used when the patient is taking certain types of medications because of the danger of bleeding or infection. Always wear gloves when using a blade razor to shave a patient.

Soften facial hair with warm water before shaving. Beards and moustaches should be washed with soap and water, dried, and brushed.

Shaving the Male Patient

Materials Needed

Razor—blade or electric
Shaving cream or soap
Mirror

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Aftershave
Bath towel
Washcloth
Washbowl or sink
Warm water (for blade razor)
Disposable gloves

Procedure

1.	Explain what you are going to do.
2.	Wash your hands.
3.	Obtain materials listed above.
4.	Provide privacy.
5.	Position patient for shaving.
6.	For shaving with a blade razor: (a) Put on disposable gloves. b) Wet washcloth with warm water. Place on patient's face for a few minutes. Remove. (c) Apply shaving cream and lather the face. (d) Hold the skin taut and shave in the direction of the hair growth. (e) Rinse the blade razor when necessary.
7.	For shaving with an electric razor: (a) Make sure face is clean and dry. Do not put anything wet on the face. (b) Turn the razor on. (c) Shave in the direction of the hair growth. (d) Turn off the razor.
8.	Remove the towel.
9.	Remove and discard the gloves.
10.	Make sure patient is safe and comfortable.
11.	Clean and put away all supplies.
12.	Wash hands.

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Eyeglasses

Some people need glasses to read; others need them every minute of the day in order to see. Be careful when handling glasses; they are very expensive and break easily. Clean glasses with water and dry with a soft cloth or tissue. Unworn glasses should be stored in an eyeglass case that is always kept in the same location.

Contact Lenses

Contact lenses are worn directly on the surface of the eye. Some lenses require special cleaning and storage. Other lenses are disposable and need no special care. Patients usually care for their own lenses.

Hearing Aids

These devices make sounds louder. However, all sound is increased, even background noise, and patients may find this very distracting and irritating. Hearing aids operate on batteries that must be replaced as needed. Also, hearing aids must be turned on in order to work. Very tiny aids are worn in the ear canal. Others have

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two parts: an ear mold and a behind-the-ear battery and control portion. Remove earwax from the earpiece with an applicator dampened with water and a little soap. Do not let the battery section get wet. This will cause serious damage to the hearing aid. Hearing aids are very expensive and difficult to fit. Handle carefully and do not drop. Store in the special container provided and keep in the same location.



Helping the Patient to Dress and Undress

When patients dress in regular clothing, rather than in bedclothes, during the day, they usually feel better. Being dressed and well groomed contributes to one's self-esteem. To some, it is a sign of getting back to the normal routines of daily life. Most patients will need some help with dressing and undressing. Some will only need their clothing placed within easy reach, so that they can dress themselves without any further help. Others will need more help. Clothing for patients who need help to dress should be easy to put on and take off—for example, shirts or dresses with zippers or snaps, instead of buttons.

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Special Aids to Help with Dressing

There are special aids that can be used to help make dressing easier. A long-handled shoehorn allows the person to put on shoes without bending over. Elastic shoelaces make it easier to slip the foot into or out of the shoe without tying or untying the shoelaces. A Velcro strip sewn on garment closures eliminates the need to button and unbutton shirts, pants and trousers. The occupational therapist may be able to teach the patient ways to make dressing easier with the use of these and other independent living aids.

Preparing to Dress the Patient

It is important to ask the patient what they want to wear. Letting the patient choose what to gives the patient a sense of being in control. Clothes should always be:

Easy to put on and off
Comfortable, and not too tight

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The correct size for ease in dressing
Suitable for the home environment
Suitable for weather conditions, if the patient is going outdoors



The following guidelines should be followed when helping the patient to dress

Put the clothing in proper order according to patient's dressing practices (underwear first, then outerwear, socks, and shoes).
Encourage the patients to dress themselves, as much as possible.
Do not rush: getting dressed can be hard work; muscles stretch and joints bend with each movement.
Put clothing on weak side first.
Remove clothing from strong side first.

Assisting the patient with an IV to change clothes

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Help the patient to sit on side of bed, if possible. If the patient must stay in bed, put them in a supine position.

Help the patient to remove used garment from arm without the IV.

Gather up sleeve of the garment on the arm with the IV. Slide sleeve over the IV site and tubing. Remove the patient's arm and hand from the sleeve.

Slide your hand along tubing to IV bag, keeping the sleeve gathered.

Remove IV from pole. Slide bag and tubing through the sleeve. Keep the bag above the patient's arm. Do not pull on the tubing.

Hang bag back on the pole.

Gather the sleeve of the clean garment that is to be put on the arm with the IV.

Remove the IV bag from the pole. Make sure the bag is above the patient's arm.

Slip sleeve and garment shoulder over the bag. Place bag back on the pole.

Slide the gathered sleeve over the tubing, hand, arm, and IV site.

Adjust garment over patient's shoulders and help patient to put other arm through other sleeve.

Assist patient to remove other garments and put on clean garments, as needed.



Personal hygiene is vital for good health and well being. When you look good, you feel good. Some people may be unable to perform self-care because of the effects of illness, pain, and discomfort; lack of strength and energy; fear of injury; and anxiety or confusion. When performing personal care activities, be sure to practice safety and proper body mechanics.

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Changing an Adult diaper

Bladder control problems can cause an adult to wear an incontinence product such as an adult diaper. Often the patient is bedridden and needs assistance to change the garment once it is soiled. Here's how to change an adult's diaper.

Materials

Gloves
Adult diaper
Baby wipes or warm water and washcloth
Towel to dry

Procedure

1.	Choose a properly sized adult diaper. There should be adequate room to close the diaper easily at the waist.
2.	Unfasten the wet diaper on both sides.
3.	Roll the patient gently to one side. Fold the diaper inward from the outside edge so the wetness is on the inside.
4.	Roll the patient to the other side over the folded diaper as far as possible and gently pull the diaper out. If it does not come out easily, tuck as much diaper under him as possible and roll him again to the opposite side and then pull the diaper through from that side.

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5.	Use baby wipes or soap and water to thoroughly clean the diaper area. Dry well; use powder or lotion to protect the skin.
6.	Roll the patient as far as possible to one side and slip a new diaper as far under him as possible, bunching half of the diaper against the patient.
7.	Roll the patient gently back over the bunched-up part of the diaper and pull the diaper through. Be sure it is even on both sides, and then fasten the diaper securely.