

How To *give a bed bath*

Abbey Hospice

Bed baths are given in place of a tub or shower bath for people who are unable to bathe themselves. *Daily* baths are usually unnecessary and not recommended for those with frail skin. If your loved one is incontinent, it is necessary to cleanse the affected area at least once a day, but a *daily full* bath may not be needed.

For many people, it can be embarrassing to give or receive a bath from a loved one. Please keep in mind that your loved one's dignity needs to be respected as much as possible, but good hygiene is essential. As you prepare to bathe, let your loved one know what you are about to do and encourage him/her to participate as much as possible.

Tips for Giving a Bed Bath

- Wear gloves if there is any chance that you might come in contact with blood, drainage, or other body fluids.
- Keep your loved one covered during the bath except for the area you are cleaning. This helps keep them from getting chilled.
- Wash cleaner areas of the body first and the dirtier areas last to help reduce the spread of germs.
- Place a towel under the part of the body being washed. A towel will absorb any excess bath water and keep bed sheets dry.
- Wash and dry well between folds of the skin.
- Keep the washcloth wet, but not so wet that it drips.
- Remove all soap residue.
- Dry the skin after it has been rinsed.

- Replace the water if it cools during the course of the bath.
- Apply lotion to the skin after bathing to help restore moisture to the body.



How to Give a Bed Bath

- Use a mild soap (ie. Dove, Ivory, or baby soap)
- Fill a basin with warm water and place on a table next to the bed.
- Beginning with the head, wipe the patient's eyes, from the nose towards the ear, with an unlathered cloth.
- Lather the cloth and continue washing the face and neck.
- Rinse the washcloth and remove soapy residue from the skin; dry well.
- Bathe each arm separately.
- Rinse off soapy residue and dry.
- For a thorough hand washing, place the hand in the basin of water while washing it.
- Wash the chest, abdomen, each leg, and then feet, following the steps described for the upper body. Remember to wash off the soapy residue and dry each area well.
- Clean the genital area by folding the washcloth into a mitt and gently wiping area with a small amount of soapy water. Rinse away soapy residue and dry area.

- Help your loved one onto his or her side.
- Wash and dry the back.

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