

Chapter 16

Assisting With Hygiene

Hygiene Basics

- The skin is the body's first line of defense against disease.
 - Intact skin prevents microbes from entering the body and causing an infection.
- Good hygiene:
 - Cleanses the skin and mucous membranes
 - Prevents body and breath odors
 - Is relaxing and increases circulation
- Culture and personal choice affect hygiene.

Daily Care

- Most people have hygiene routines and habits.
- You assist with hygiene whenever it is needed.
 - Protect the right to privacy and to personal choice.
- Routine care is given during the day and evening.
 - Routine care given before breakfast is called early morning care or AM care.
 - Morning care is given after breakfast.
 - Afternoon care is given after lunch and before the evening meal.
 - Care given in the evening at bedtime is called evening care or PM care.

Oral Hygiene

- Oral hygiene (mouth care) does the following:
 - Keeps the mouth and teeth clean
 - Prevents mouth odors and infections
 - Increases comfort
 - Makes food taste better
 - Reduces the risk for cavities (dental caries) and periodontal disease (gum disease, pyorrhea)

Oral Hygiene, cont'd.

- Flossing does the following:
 - Removes food from between the teeth
 - Removes plaque and tartar
 - Plaque and tartar cause periodontal disease.
- You may have to perform oral hygiene for persons who:
 - Are very weak
 - Cannot move or use their arms
 - Are too confused to brush their teeth

Oral Care for the Unconscious Person

- Mouth care for the unconscious person
 - Unconscious persons may have mouth dryness and crusting on the tongue and mucous membranes.
 - The care plan tells you what cleaning agent to use.
 - Use sponge swabs to apply the cleaning agent.
 - To prevent cracking of the lips, apply a lubricant to the lips after cleaning.
 - Check the care plan.
 - Protect unconscious persons from choking and aspiration.
 - Aspiration is breathing fluid, food, vomitus, or an object into the lungs.

Oral Care for the Unconscious Person, cont'd.

- To prevent aspiration:
 - Position the person on one side with the head turned well to the side.
 - Use only a small amount of fluid to clean the mouth.
 - Do not insert dentures.
- Keep the person's mouth open with a padded tongue blade.
- Unconscious persons cannot speak or respond to you.
 - Always assume that unconscious persons can hear.
 - Explain what you are doing step by step.
- Mouth care is given at least every 2 hours.
 - Follow the nurse's directions and the care plan.

Denture Care

- Denture care

- A denture is an artificial tooth or a set of artificial teeth.
- Mouth care is given and dentures cleaned as often as natural teeth.
- Dentures are slippery when wet. Hold them firmly.
- To use a cleaning agent, follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Hot water causes dentures to lose their shape (warp).
- Remind patients and residents not to wrap dentures in tissues or napkins.

Bathing

- Bathing has the following benefits:
 - It cleans the skin.
 - It cleans the mucous membranes of the genital and anal areas.
 - Microbes, dead skin, perspiration, and excess oils are removed.
 - A bath is refreshing and relaxing.
 - Circulation is stimulated and body parts exercised.
 - Observations are made.
 - You have time to talk to the person.

Bathing, cont'd.

- Complete or partial baths, tub baths, or showers are given.
 - The method depends on:
 - The person's condition
 - Self-care abilities
 - Personal choice
- Personal choice, weather, activity, and illness affect bathing frequency.
 - The care plan tells you when to bathe the person.

Bathing, cont'd.

- The complete bed bath involves washing the person's entire body in bed.
 - Bed baths are usually needed by persons who are:
 - Unconscious
 - Paralyzed
 - In casts or traction
 - Weak from illness or surgery
- The partial bath involves bathing the face, hands, axillae (underarms), back, buttocks, and perineal area.
 - Some persons bathe themselves in bed or at the sink.
 - You assist or give partial baths as needed.

Tub Baths and Showers

- Falls, burns, and chilling from water are risks.
- Tub baths are relaxing.
 - A tub bath lasts no longer than 20 minutes.
- Showers
 - If persons can stand, they use the grab bars for support during the shower.
 - Showers have non-skid surfaces or a bath mat is used.
 - Never let weak or unsteady persons stand in the shower.
 - Some shower rooms have two or more stations.
 - Protect the person's privacy.

Perineal Care

- Perineal care (pericare) involves cleaning the genital and anal areas.
 - Cleaning prevents infection and odors, and it promotes comfort.
- Perineal care is done:
 - Daily during the bath
 - Whenever the area is soiled with urine or feces

Perineal Care, cont'd.

- Perineal care is very important for persons who:
 - Have urinary catheters
 - Have had rectal or genital surgery
 - Have given birth
 - Are menstruating
 - Are incontinent of urine or feces
 - Are uncircumcised
- The person does perineal care if able.

Perineal Care, cont'd.

- When giving perineal care, Standard Precautions, medical asepsis, and the Bloodborne Pathogen Standard are followed.
 - Work from the cleanest area to the dirtiest.
- When giving perineal care:
 - Use warm water, not hot.
 - Use washcloths, towelettes, cotton balls, or swabs according to agency policy.
 - Rinse thoroughly.
 - Pat dry after rinsing.