

Extra Help for Caregivers – Working on Hygiene

Sensory aversions or lack of interest or organization skills can get in the way of adequate hygiene for many persons with IDD. Here are some suggestions to improve hygiene routines:



1. Try not to let hygiene be a fight.

Be flexible. Give choices. Try different times of day. Be creative with new ideas. Use visuals.

2. Give reasons to clean up. Why?

As a person grows up, it is more dignified for a person to decide and remember why they do a task, rather than just have to do it because someone else told them to do it.

"You don't want to smell or have others say you smell."

"It is hard to get and keep a job if you smell."

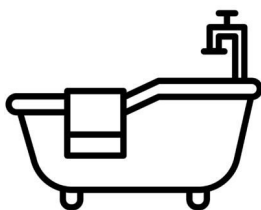
"You need to take care of your skin for it to stay healthy and prevent infections."

WHY?

Have a family or household rule that we all clean up every day. Make it part of the routine.

Create a schedule and a reminder system. Use motivating incentives and "if-then" suggestions.

3. Explore sensory issues and look for a work around.



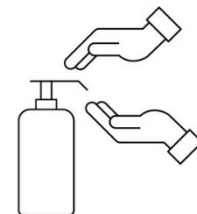
Consider which is easier, showering or bathing. Sometimes a mix of showering and finishing with a sit in the tub for a final rinse can get all body parts washed.

Check which temperature works best.

Dry with a towel or a fan.

If being naked is difficult, consider wearing some clothes or a bathing suit. You can wash your top half, cover up, then wash your bottom half and cover that.

Is there a problem with soap lather or smell? Try different ones. Pump bottles can control the amount of soap or shampoo better than pouring liquids.



Consider sponge bathing as an alternative - stand up, use a washcloth and water at the sink and clean one body part at a time.

Gym wipes are another option.

4. **Is getting water in the face making hair washing difficult?**

Consider swim goggles or a shampoo visor.

Try using a pouring pitcher rather than a shower head.

Wash hair separately from bathing, use a portable shampoo basin at the sink.

Try different shampoos if smells and lather are an issue.

Try pump bottles for ease of use.

Dry shampoo can help you spread out how often to wash with shampoo. There are also shampoo wipes.



5. **Deodorant and clean clothes are also important steps.**



Use deodorant every day. There are different smells and textures to try.

Set family rules for how often clothes should be washed.

Socks and underwear need to be changed every day.

Make a schedule for changing pants and shirts too.



With supports and practice, most people can develop better hygiene habits that keep them healthy and smelling fresh.