



Personal Hygiene

Keeping your body clean is an important part of keeping you healthy and feeling good about oneself. Caring about the way you look is important to your self-esteem. You don't need to wear the latest designer labels to look good. There are other things that you can do which are much more important for your image.

Clothes

Even if you are not going through puberty at the moment and are sweating profusely, clothes can get stained, dirty, and grubby. Therefore, you need to change often and wash your clothes often. The clothes that we wear are directly touching our skin. Therefore, our clothes collect dead skin cells, sweat, and possibly other wear and tear stains. Overnight, bacteria start to work on these stains so our clothes do not smell as nice on the second day of wearing and should be washed, Especially, when we are going through puberty.

In addition, stay away from cigarette smoke, as it will get into your clothes and hair.

Using "smell nice" products

It is important to start wearing underarm deodorant and/or anti-perspirant as we enter adolescence. While kids are going through puberty, they often sweat and give off body odor. This is when special sweat glands under the arms and around the genitals roar into full production pouring out sweat which smell. Showering daily and wearing deodorant will help to eliminate body odor. Remember spraying cologne and/or perfume will not take care of body odor if you do not shower. This is not a good substitute! In addition, when showering, make sure that you wash your body with both soap and water. Water alone cannot get rid of all the dirt/bacteria that we encounter on a regular basis.

Shoes

We spend a lot of time on our feet. Our shoes are very close to the place where the largest collection of sweat glands live - our feet. Sweat gets into our shoes and then bacteria arrives and takes over - which leaves a very bad odor.

- If you have one pair of shoes for school, then try to get them off as soon as you get home so that they can air and dry out overnight.
- If you have multiple pairs, then use them on alternate days to give them a better chance of drying out.
- Keep your shoes clean by brushing, polishing, or washing them. They will look better, last longer, and be less likely to smell.
- You may want to use foot powder on your feet or inside your shoes. Special innersoles in your shoes, which you can take out and wash, can help also.

Teeth

Brush your teeth at least twice a day - after breakfast and before bed. Three times a day is optimal, but not always feasible. Therefore, if you cannot brush your teeth mid-day, fill your mouth with water and swish it around to get rid of anything sticking to your teeth.

Hair

Our hair follicles produce oil. Our scalp contains sweat glands, and dead skin cells which come off our scalp. The oil, sweat, and dead cells combined can make our hair look greasy and dirty unless it is washed daily.

To keep your hair clean:

- Wash hair regularly with shampoo. Massage your scalp well while washing your hair; this will remove most dead skin cells, oil, and dirt.
- Rinse with clean water.
- Conditioner will help if you have longer hair as it makes the hair smoother and easier to comb.

Hands

It is most important to wash your hands frequently throughout the day. Washing one's hands is most important, before and after meals, using the bathroom, physical activity and upon returning home from school. If you cannot get to the bathroom, hand sanitizer is a fine substitute. Germs are abundant in schools, and washing one's hands can help keep germs away.

Tips for parents

Children get sick more often than adults. Their immune systems are weaker because they are not fully developed. Children spend much of their time in close contact with other children at school where germs are easily transmitted. Unfortunately, most children are not as conscious of personal hygiene as they should be, greatly increasing their risk of illness and the likelihood they will pass it on. As a parent, it is not always easy to teach proper hand washing and dental hygiene. If it's a battle to get your children to wash their hands and brush their teeth, here are some tips that may help your children become hygiene professionals.

1. Make it fun! Kids always respond better to activities that they perceive as fun. Help your child to view hygiene as less of a chore by purchasing hygienic tools that have pizzazz. Brightly colored toothpaste with sparkles, yummy flavors or favorite characters are always a hit. Scents, vivid colors and fun shapes are great for soaps and shampoos.
2. Set a good example. If you want your child to practice good hygiene, they must see that you do the same. Make a point of routinely washing your hands and brushing you teeth when your child is present. Your children look up to you. You must set the example.

3. Enforce routines. Washing hands and brushing teeth should be something that becomes second nature to your child. Every morning and every night before bed, make sure hygiene happens at the same time and consistently. Before meals, always have children wash their hands, even at restaurants or away from home. For school-age children, think about putting a reminder note in their lunch. If you know your child will not make the trip to the sink at school, include a portable hand sanitizer in the lunchbox.
4. Time Matters. How often have you seen your child quickly run their hands under the water or neglect to brush all of their teeth? It is important to install a timeframe for your child so that they understand how long is appropriate for washing and brushing. A useful trick is to tell your child to sing a song like “Happy Birthday” twice before they stop washing their hands. For brushing teeth, play a song that lasts about three minutes or purchase a timer so your child is aware of when to stop.
5. Keep it “top of mind”. Remind your children of how important it is to practice good hygiene. Explain to them that although they may not see germs, they are present and can make them sick. Connect hygiene to illness by reminding them of the last time they were ill. The memory may be powerful enough to convince them of the importance of hygiene.

