

# 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.