

## Assisting with Activities of Daily Living and Personal Care In-Service

### Assisting with Activities of Daily Living and Personal Care

**Personal care** means providing care that is related to the individual body, appearance, hygiene, and movement.

#### **Tasks Related to Personal Care Include:**

- Bathing
- Teeth and mouth care
- Dressing/grooming
- Toileting
- Eating
- Ambulation
- Transferring
- Care of the individual's environment
- Assisting with self-administration of medication

People may require personal care for a number of reasons. Assistance with personal care may be temporary while a person is recovering from an injury or illness or may be permanent, meaning assistance is required for the remainder of their lives.

*Providing personal care is a priority for the Home Care Aide and a privilege.* It is the most important task You do. Personal care delivery fulfills the client concern about their physical health and general well-being. Always ensure when assisting with personal care of the client to provide care with dignity and respect to the client wishes, ensure to provide privacy and promote as much independence as possible with supervision and ensuring the client is safe at all times, assisting further as needed based of the unique client needs and limitations. Always follow the Service Plan and discuss with your supervisor regarding any concerns or questions.

This in-service will explore the importance of providing personal care and provide instruction with performing tasks related to personal care. The importance of infection control and how Home Care Aides can work to break the chain of infection in order to keep patients healthy is discussed. Bathing, teeth/mouth care, dressing/grooming, toileting, and eating are topics discussed with explanation on how Home Care Aides can provide assistance with these types of personal care.

Infection control is of essence and vital to each HCA understanding. It is crucial that the Home Care Aid perform proper hand hygiene, at least 20-30 seconds and dries their hands, donning gloves on whenever there will be contact with client skin during hygiene and personal care and meal preparation or feeding. Proper hand hygiene is the number one was of preventing the spread of infection and breaking the chain of infection.

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### Procedure: Tub or Shower Bath

- Always wash hands before any procedure to prevent infection and dry well. Wash hands for at least 20-30 seconds. Wear gloves if will assist the client in hygiene care.
- Ensure that the bathroom is warm and comfortable. Take care it is not too cold or too hot
  - Remove any fall risk hazards, such as loose rugs, from the floor.
- Allow the client to test the water temperature for their comfort. Adjust as needed. If the client is unable to test the temperature on your wrist to ensure it is not too hot or too cold.
- Assist the client to the bathroom. If the client is ambulatory, assist them as needed to undress and then transfer them into the tub or shower. Undress the client immediately before getting them into the shower or tub. This prevents them from chilling.
- Never let a weak person stand to bathe or leave them in the bath alone. You can stay in the bathroom and draw the shower curtain to provide privacy. Communicate with them frequently to let them know you are there to provide assistance.
- Water should be turned off and the tub drained before assisting the patient to transfer out of the tub.
- Ensure the client is properly dried and have towels to cover self to try or assist them if needed. Pay attention to ensure all moisture is removed from between the skin folds or direct the client to ensure they dry well between the skin folds to prevent moisture accumulation and skin breakdown.
- Assist the client in getting dressed, if needed, supervising to ensure safety and the client does not injure self.

### Teeth & Mouth Care

Performing or assisting with mouth hygiene is an important task of the Home Care Aide. Mouth hygiene should be performed at least twice per day, with morning and evening care. Mouth hygiene may also be performed after eating meals and any time the patient requests. Regular, daily flossing helps to remove plaque and food debris which promotes bacteria, from the patient's mouth. Unclean mouths harbor bacteria, which can cause additional health problems for the patient. Having a clean mouth promotes a sense of comfort and self-esteem for a client.

### Procedure: Patients Who Can Brush Their Own Teeth or Need Some Assistance

- Explain the procedure to client. Provide for privacy.
- Wash and dry hands. Always wear gloves when providing mouth care.
- Assemble equipment (**emesis basin**, water, cup, toothbrush, toothpaste, mouthwash, and a towel).
- Ensure the client is in an upright position for safety. A high sitting position prevents choking or aspiration.
- If the client is able to brush their own teeth, provide equipment and assist as needed.
- Wet toothbrush, apply a small amount of toothpaste to the bristles on the brush.

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- Hold the toothbrush at a 45 degree angle to the gum line. Brush one tooth at a time in an up and down motion. Start from the top of the gum line and work down the tooth. Start at the upper teeth and then complete the lower teeth.
- To clean biting surfaces of teeth and the tongue, use a back and forth motion.
- Be sure to brush all surfaces of the teeth, gums, tongue, and mouth.
- Ensure the patient adequately rinses their mouth with clean water and dries their lips/face.
- Offer mouthwash and lip moisturizer as needed and according to patient preferences.

### Denture Care

- Carefully place dentures in a water filled cup or container.
- Carry the dentures to the sink using a denture cup to prevent accidental breakage.
- Place a towel in the sink to prevent accidentally breaking dentures on the hard surface of the sink while you are washing them. Hold them firmly.
- Clean dentures as you would teeth. Use denture cleaning products. Use warm, but not hot water. Hot water can cause dentures to warp and no longer fit the patient correctly. Rinse dentures completely.

### Dressing & Grooming

Providing assistance with dressing and grooming is an important task of the Home Care Aide. Maintaining a person's appearance is important especially during times of illness. It helps people to feel more like themselves and helps the client appear familiar to family, which is important during times of stress and illness. Clients, especially those with conditions such as diabetes in which there is poor circulation to the feet, should have their feet inspected daily for any open wounds, ingrown nails or ulcers. Any red, open, bleeding, or problematic conditions should be reported to the supervisor. This section provides instruction about how to assist with patient dressing, apply compression stockings, provide hand and foot care, and shave a patient. Remember, if a client is on blood thinners, **NEVER USE A RAZOR** as even an accidental small nick can result in severe blood loss. Always use a safe electrical shaver. Complete these tasks as directed by the Service Plan. Keep in mind patient preferences and respect the client's privacy, wishes and dignity.

### Assisting with Dressing

- Some clients may be able to independently dress. For these clients, provide assistance only as needed. Home Care Aides should encourage their clients to do as much as possible on their own. Other clients may need extensive assistance with dressing. In order to promote self-esteem and empower clients, allow them to select the clothing they prefer. If the client has mild to moderate dementia, you may offer a smaller selection of clothing option to prevent client from getting frustrated and confused, such as a green or

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red shirt to wear instead of offering to pick clothing from the closet. Important to note to offer client a choice and respect their choice, which promotes their self-esteem and a feeling of accomplishment.

- Allow the client to select clothing they wish to wear.
- Assemble clothing in the order it is to be put on. Clothing for the upper body should be put on before pants/skirts, which should be put on before socks and shoes.
- Ensure the client's clothing is clean and in good condition. Clothing should be appropriate to the weather.
- It may be helpful for the client to wear clothing that is easier for them to put on independently. For example, pants without buttons or zippers can easily be pulled on; shirts with few buttons are easier to close; sneakers with Velcro versus laces and slip on shoes all may be helpful for patients who have difficulty with their fine motor coordination or finger dexterity.
- Encourage the client to do as much self-dressing as possible with supervision as needed for safety. Assist if they become fatigued, frustrated or are unable to perform the task.

### Assisting with Eating

Home Care Aides can provide an atmosphere that is pleasant during meal time. Ensure there are no unpleasant odors or clutter. Empty trash cans, and remove urinals and bedpans from sight. Offer to assist the client to the bathroom and to perform mouth care prior to eating. Ensure patients who wear dentures place them in their mouths prior to eating. This allows the patient to better chew and digest their food.

Clients should always be positioned in an upright position during mealtimes. This helps to prevent choking. For clients who have swallowing or choking problems, they should be kept in an upright position for 30-60 minutes once their meal is complete.

Clients with **visual impairments** may need to be instructed about the position of food on their plate. An easy way to do this is to use the clock method. Instruct clients about position of food using the face of a clock as a guide. For example, "The peas are at 2:00 o'clock, the meatloaf is at 6:00 o'clock and the rice is at 9:00 o'clock."

Some clients may only need assistance with preparing food and are able to eat independently. In meal planning and preparation, ensure to consider client preferences, special diets, and dietary restrictions or allergies prior to preparing a meal which all can be found in Service Plan or consulting with client and/or their family. Many types of adaptive equipment such as special plates, cups, and eating utensils are available to help people be as independent as possible while eating. Other individuals will require complete care during eating and the Home Care Aide will need to feed the client. HCA's should sit next to the client while feeding and offer to keep those who are independent eaters company. Mealtime is a good time to get to know the client. Client who prefer to pray or have religious or spiritual practices prior to meals should be

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allowed to practice these rituals. Give privacy as appropriate and requested. Ensure the client when eating swallows the food completely, offer liquids of choice such as water, tea or juice every 1-2 bites of food to ensure proper digestion. Never force feed an individual who is sleepy, non-compliant, refusing or weak as this can result in choking and aspiration.

Home Care Aides should offer foods that are appealing to their client and the client enjoys while ensuring they are nutritional, and allow them to choose the foods they would like to eat, as appropriate.

### **Assisting with Eating**

- Inform the client that it is mealtime. Provide choices about foods.
- Always wash and dry your hands. Always apply gloves during meal preparation and when assisting with eating.
- Assemble equipment needed (e.g. bowl, plates, cup, eating utensils, napkins).
- Allow the client to select foods they prefer or meal preference in accordance to their diet.
- Prepare the client's environment by ensuring there are no unpleasant odors or sights.
- Offer mouth care prior to eating. Assist with applying dentures. This allows a client to be able to effectively chew their food. Assist or encourage the client to put on glasses so they may see their food.
- Position the client in a high upright sitting position. This will prevent the client from choking or aspirating foods or liquids.
- Allow the client time to pray before eating, if they wish.
- Arrange food attractively on the plate.
- Encourage the client to do as much as they are capable. Assist only as needed.
- Cut food into small, bite-sized pieces if client is unable to do so.
- Place a napkin under the client's chin. Replace soiled napkins as needed.
- Inform the client of food temperatures, especially for food that is hot.
- Use forks and spoons gently when feeding the client. Never force feed a client.
- Allow adequate time between bites before offering the next bite.
- Encourage the patient to chew food well before proceeding to taking the next bite.
- Offer liquids of choice, such as water, tea or juice every 1-2 bites of food. Ensure the food is properly swallowed and is not pocketed at sides of cheeks which can later result in choking and aspiration.