



Because no family should stand alone

Personal Care & Hygiene – Tips and Support for Autistic Children

Brushing Teeth

- Use a soft-bristle or silicone toothbrush.
- Let the child explore the toothbrush before use.
- Brush in front of a mirror so they can see what is happening.
- Begin with short brushing times and increase gradually.
- Try unflavoured or mild-flavour toothpaste if mint is too strong.

Haircuts

- Let the child visit the salon beforehand with no expectation of a haircut.
- Use ear defenders or scissors-only if clippers are overwhelming.
- Go slowly and allow breaks throughout.
- Try cutting small amounts over several days instead of one sitting.

Nail Cutting

- Cut nails after a bath when they are soft.
- Show the child what is happening step-by-step.
- Use distraction (favourite show, snack, or toy).
- Try an electric nail file if clipping is too sharp or startling.

Bathing / Washing Hair

- Let the child control water flow where possible.
- Use a handheld shower head or a jug for more predictable pouring.
- Try tear-free shampoos with mild scents.
- Introduce hair washing slowly – start with water only, then shampoo later.

Toilet Training

- Use visual step-by-step toilet routine cards.

- Start with sitting fully clothed just to get used to the toilet.
- Celebrate small progress – even sitting for a few seconds is a win.
- Do not rush – progress is gradual and unique for every child.

Clothing Textures

- Remove labels and choose seamless socks/soft materials.
- Allow your child to choose their preferred clothes when possible.
- Buy duplicates of their favourite comfortable clothing.
- Introduce new clothing gradually, starting with touch before wearing.

Every child has their own pace. These challenges are not about refusal or behaviour, but about sensory experiences and trust. Small steps forward are real progress. You are doing an amazing job.