

Safe Bathing

Bathing can be a difficult task for the elderly, particularly those with dementia or debilitating physical problems. As a caregiver, you will be the one responsible for seeing that your care recipient can bathe safely. Here are some tips to ensure safety:

MODIFYING

- Install hand rails or grab bars in shower and bath.
- Install self-dispensing liquid soap in bath.
- Use the rubber mat or nonskid slips in the bath or shower.
- Keep the bathroom clean and free of clutter.
- Provide a plastic shower chair or inflatable rubber device for the tub.

HELPING

- Have the following within reach: rubber bathmat, cloth bath mat for the tub side, wash cloth, soap, bath towel, deodorant, perfume, powder, lotion and clean clothes.
- Make sure the bathroom is warm before undressing the person.
- Check the water temperature to make sure it's not too hot.
- Help the person into the tub.
- Wash their whole body, beginning with the face and hair and work down to the genital and rectal area last.
- Help the person out of the tub.
- Dry them, beginning with their face and ending with the feet.
- Apply lotion, perfume, deodorant or powder as required or desired.



Prepare for bathing by warming the bathroom and having a washcloth, soap, bathmat, bath towel, clean clothes and other necessities close at hand.

BEDBOUND BATHING

- Gather all supplies: bath basin, hair-washing basin, and/or other container of warm soapy water, mild soap, washcloth, bath blanket, towel, lotion, deodorant and powder.
- Remove all electrical equipment, like a radio or hair dryer.
- Fill a basin 2/3 full with warm water (approximately 120° F) and replace the water as it cools or gets dirty.
- Undress the person and lay them on a large towel or bath blanket.
- Talk to the person during bathing.
- Test the temperature of the water so it's not too hot.
- Soap them down.
- When washing, work on the face and upper torso first, then each side of the body from the arm and down to the leg, making sure to get into all cracks and folds of skin.
- Use a light cotton blanket to cover the person during the bath to provide privacy and warmth.
- Soak and wash feet and hands in a basin of soapy water.
- Dry each body part to prevent chills, and then gently rub in lotion to prevent drying and soothe the skin. Apply powder as desired.
- Dress the person carefully and cover them with a dry blanket.
- Follow any special instructions provided by a doctor or nurse.

An individual may not need a full bath every day. But a person's face, underarms and private areas should be kept clean daily or on a schedule recommended by a nurse or physician.

SHOWERING

- Place a shower bench or seat in the shower so the person can sit down while he/she showers.