

Module 3

BASICS OF PERSONAL CARE

- Comfort Measures
- Useful Terminology
- Equipment
- Bathing and Skin Care
- Dental Hygiene
- Care of the Hair – Shampooing in Bed
- Care of the Nails and Feet

BASICS OF PERSONAL CARE

Please note: At all times follow the principles of **Back Injury Prevention** as set out in Module 2. If you have any questions of a specific nature, contact Compassion HomeCare immediately to discuss it with the Office Manager or Designate.

Comfort Measures

Your client may experience discomfort for many reasons:

- Damp or wet dressings or clothing
- Constrictive clothing
- Wrinkled bed linens
- Noise or excess activity

Removal of all painful irritants, combined with careful repositioning can allow the clients to have considerable relief for an extended time. The client can often suggest the most comfortable position to assume.

Check the environment for sources of discomfort if behaviour indicators are present, the best source may often be the clients themselves:

Behavioural Indicators of Pain			
Vocalizations	Body Movements	Facial Expressions	Social Interactions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moaning Crying Screaming Gasping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restlessness Not moving Muscle Tension Shielding (protective movements) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grimace Clenched teeth Open, alert eyes Biting the lips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoidance of conversations Focus only on activities of pain relief Reduced attention span

Try ***Relief Measures*** such as:

- Relaxation and Massage
- Guided Imagery and Distraction
- Position Changes
- Removal of Irritants

Sometimes clients experience shortness of breath, if this occurs, ask the client to take a deep breath or breathe more slowly.

Encourage your client to rest between periods of activity because fatigue increases pain perception.

Useful Terminology

Raised Toilet Seat	A seat used to assist a person who has difficulty getting up and down on a toilet
Commode Aid	A device that acts as an elevated toilet seat when used with a splash guard, or as a commode when used with a pail
Toilet Frame	A free-standing unit that fits over the toilet and provides supports on either side for ease of getting up and down.
Grab bars for tub and shower	Properly installed wall mounted safety bars that hold a person's weight
Safety mat and strips	Rough vinyl strips that adhere to the bottom of the tub and shower to prevent slipping
Hand-held shower hose	A movable shower hose and head that allows the flow of water to be directed to all parts of the body
Bath Bench	Aid for a person who has difficulty sitting down in or getting up from the bottom of the tub
Bath Transfer Bench	A bench that straddles the side of the tub and allows a person to get out of the tub easily
Bathtub Safety Rails	Support for getting in and out of the tub
Urinal and Bed Pan	For toileting in the bed
Catheter	A tube which drains urine from the bladder into a drainage bag
Leg and Night Bags	Drainage bags attached to catheters
Portable Commode Chair	For ease in toileting at the bedside
Independent Living	The freedom to choose where and how one lives. It is the ability to obtain the services necessary to carry out day-to-day activities. It is assuming the responsibility of directing one's own life.
Home Support Worker	One who provides personal care and assistance with dressing, grooming, bathing, eating, toilet care and other daily activities which may involve meal preparation, shopping, household management, etc.
Pressure Sore	A skin irritation (red spots on the skin) or break caused by unrelieved pressure; if a pressure sore turns into a Decubitus Ulcer - or a deep open skin sore – it can take months to heal. To relieve pressure, weight shifts must be done periodically throughout the day.

Alternating Pressure Mattress	Minimizes stress on skin tissue from pressure
Egg Carton Pad	A foam mattress pad shaped like an egg carton that reduces pressure and improves air circulation

Equipment



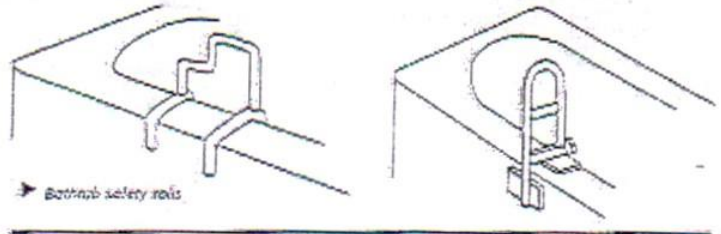
▲ Urinal and Bedpans



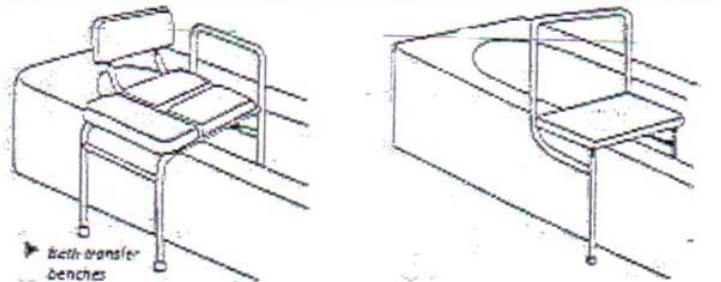
▲ Toilet frame

▲ Raised toilet seat

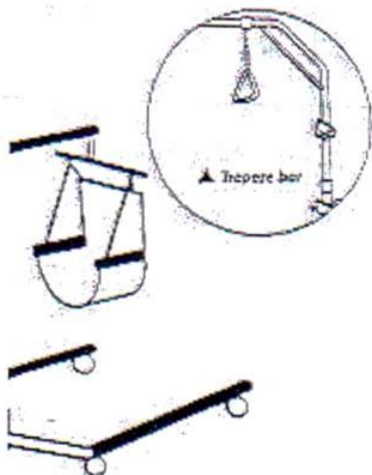
▲ Bidet



▶ Bathtub safety rails



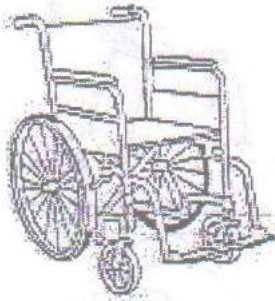
▶ Toilet transfer benches



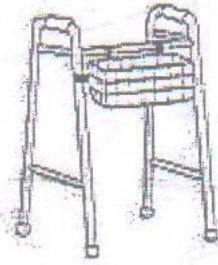
▲ Shower bar



▲ Portable commode chair



▲ Wheelchair

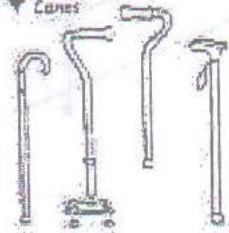


▲ Walker

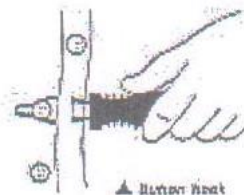


▲ Electric Scooter

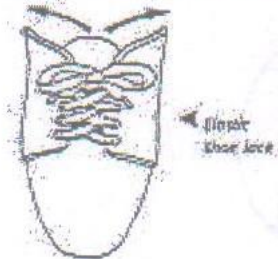
▼ Canes



▲ Dressing stick



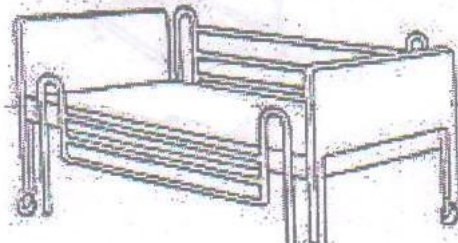
▲ Button hook



▲ Shoe lock



▲ Shoe horn



Bathing and Skin Care

When caring for all clients, it is very important that you ensure:

- personal cleanliness
- good grooming
- adequate skin condition

Good hygiene is important in promoting a persons' self esteem and in preventing illnesses. You will often have to work with clients who are unable to meet their own hygiene needs. It is important for you to assess the adequacy of clients' hygiene practices and determine their ability to perform care.

GUIDELINES:

- ✓ Bathe any body part as soon as it becomes soiled. Problems such as incontinence, wound drainage or excess sweating may require bathing several times a day.
- ✓ Attempt to provide baths during the time of day that the client prefers
- ✓ Protect clients from injury by controlling the bathwater temperature
- ✓ Wear gloves whenever there is risk of contacting body fluids, such as feces, vaginal, perineal or wound drainage.
- ✓ Control environmental factors that may alter skin (i.e. moisture, heat and pressure)
- ✓ Encourage clients to participate in bathing and skin care to maintain independence with self-care.

There are several **reasons for bathing a client:**

- Takes waste products (i.e., feces, urine & blood) off the skin
- Cools and refreshes the client
- Stimulates the skin and improves circulation
- Requires movement of the muscles
- Provides a good opportunity for you to observe the client and their skin condition

Clients at home may not need to have a complete bath each day. They may prefer to have a partial bath at times. The frequency of the client's bath will depend on climate, need, skin condition and their health.

Most people are used to bathing themselves privately; therefore, some clients may be embarrassed to have another person do this for them.

It is very important that you demonstrate your understanding of the clients' feelings by keeping him/her covered and not exposing him/her. Bathe your client in a professional and reassuring manner.

Bathing and Skin Care

There are four types of baths. Some clients may have all four types at different times during your assignment, while others only one all the time. If you have any concerns about the type of bath your client takes or would like to suggest new ways, discuss this with your supervisor first.

1. *The complete bath.* This is usually given in bed. Because the client is weak or unable to bathe himself/herself, it is your responsibility to bathe him/her. When you are giving the bath, the client will usually give you little or no assistance.
2. *The partial bath.* A client may be able to take care of some of his/her own bathing requirements. When this is the case, you will be responsible for bathing only the areas that are hard for him/her to reach (i.e., back, feet or genitalia).
3. *The tub baths.* This is given in a tub. Do not give a tub bath until you check with your supervisor.
4. *The shower.* The client is bathed under running water. This should be checked with your supervisor.

Rules to Follow when Bathing a client

- Usually, the complete bath is given as part of the morning care. However, if your client enjoys his/her bath at another time of day, try to follow his/her request.
- Take everything to the bedside before you start the bath.
- Always cover the client with a bath blanket before giving the complete bath. If you do not have a bath blanket, a thin blanket, big towel, or terry cloth bathrobe can be used.
- Use good body mechanics. Keep your feet separated, stand firmly, bend your knees and keep your back straight.
- When you are using soap, keep it in the soap dish, not the basin of water.
- Observe safety rules.
- Use lotions and creams the client usually uses. Do not ask him/her to buy the one you prefer. Deodorant is used only if the client requests it and then after the entire bath is completed.
- Check the client's bedclothes for personal items before putting them in the laundry.
- Talk to the client as you bathe him/her.

- Keep the client's body in proper alignment.
- Change the water as often as you need to so that you always have warm clean water.
- Continually observe the client for distress. If he/she is tired or uncomfortable, stop the bath.

Pressure Sores

There is more information on Pressure Sores in [Module 4: Positioning a client](#)

The best treatment for pressure sores is prevention!

You should observe the clients skin condition on a regular basis for signs of redness, swelling and breakdown.

Pressure sores form easily over bony areas when there is pressure against the skin and bone. Clients who spend a lot of time lying and sitting or are unable to feel pressure in certain limbs or areas need to be carefully watched.

A breakdown of the skin poses serious risks to a client's health because it eliminates the body's first line of defence against infection.

Clients at High Risk for Pressure Sores

- A client with decrease sensation (i.e., paralysis, immobilization, stroke)
- Bedridden clients
- Clients with poor nutrition and hydration

Changing your client's' position often is the best way to prevent sores from developing. Any client, who is not able to move on his own, should be moved from side-back-side at least every 2 hours, even at night.

In addition to keeping a client's bed linens free from wrinkles, there are a number of devices available to assist with decreasing pressure (i.e. mattresses, foams, splints, wedges). If you feel a client could benefit from such a device, please ask the office.

At the first indication of a pressure sore is normally a reddened area over a bony area, Home Support Workers are required to contact the Nursing Supervisor at Compassion HomeCare immediately to seek further instruction.

Care of the Hair

Shampooing

Regular shampooing helps to maintain healthy hair and scalp and promotes self-esteem and a sense of comfort for your client. Excess oil and perspiration build up after only a few days. And shampooing can remove such things as dried blood, gravel or dirt that could cause infection.

Hair care can most often be done for a client when they take a bath or shower. Proper hair care is still especially important if a client is bedridden, and thus may require a shampoo in bed.

Equipment Needed:

- ✓ 2 bath towels
- ✓ Face cloth
- ✓ Shampoo
- ✓ Water jug, pot or bowl
- ✓ Plastic trough (if available) otherwise a large pan (e.g. roaster, babies' tub or dishpan)
- ✓ Large bucket if using trough
- ✓ Garbage bag or plastic pad

Steps for Shampooing Hair in Bed

- Explain to the client what you are going to do.
- Wash your hands and arrange equipment within reach.
- Place the garbage bag or plastic pad under client's shoulders, neck and head.
- Position client with head and shoulders at top edge of bed. Place trough or large pan under client's head and a bucket at end of trough (if using). Be sure the trough extends beyond the edge of mattress.
- Support client's neck with a rolled towel and place a bath towel across his shoulders.
- Brush client's hair before starting to remove any tangles and excess debris.
- Fill water jug with warm water.
- Ask client to hold a face cloth over his eyes.
- With water jug, slowly pour water over client's hair until it is completely wet. Apply a small amount of shampoo. Work up lather, massaging scalp around hairline and back of neck.
- Rinse hair with water. Making sure water is draining into basin. Repeat until all soap is gone.
- Wrap client's head in bath towel. Dry his face with cloth.
- Use second towel if the first becomes saturated.
- Comb hair to remove tangles and dry. Style as desired.

Dental Hygiene

Proper dental hygiene is a very important component of your clients' health that is most often overlooked.

Encouraging your client to brush after each meal (or at least twice/day) should be as routine as washing their face in the morning. If a client is too ill or unable to perform routine brushing and flossing, then it is your responsibility to ensure it is done.

Reasons for Dental Hygiene?

- Provides a means for moisturizing the mouth which may be dry or irritated
- Cleans the tooth surfaces
- Gives a sense of comfort

When assisting a client to brush, the following equipment should be arranged before beginning:

- ✓ Toothbrush & toothpaste
- ✓ Water glass with cool water
- ✓ A basin or bowl for spitting
- ✓ Face cloth and towel

Steps for Assisting a Client with Dental Care

- Explain to the client what you will be doing.
- Wash your hands and arrange the equipment needed within easy reach.
- Apply toothpaste to toothbrush, pour a small amount of water over end of brush.
- Brush inner and outer surfaces of upper and lower teeth, always brushing from gum onto crown of each tooth. Use short strokes.
- Clean biting surfaces of teeth by holding brush parallel to teeth and brushing gently back and forth. Brush sides of teeth also by moving bristles back and forth.
- Lightly brush over surface and side of tongue. Avoid gagging the client.
- Allow client to rinse his mouth thoroughly by taking several sips of water, swishing it across all tooth surfaces and spitting it into bowl.
- Wash clients face and tidy up around the area.

Care of the Nails and Feet

A Home Support Worker should provide routine fingernail care and foot hygiene to prevent infection, foot odours and injury. Hardened or large nails should not be attempted.

Often a client may be unaware of a foot or toenail problem until pain or discomfort develops. If the client develops ingrown nails, large callous or has circulatory problems, Specialized Foot Care by a nurse is necessary. Regular bathing of the feet provides an opportunity early detection of any problems. Check with the office if you are not sure about your client's needs.

It is important that a client's feet and toenails be maintained so they can stand and walk comfortably.

Foot Care is restricted to bathing the feet, and if required, application of a moisturizing lotion. Home Support Workers are **NOT** permitted to cut the toenails of **ANY** client, or to provide foot care services including callous removal, hooking out ingrown toenails and using a sharp object to clean under toenails.

Elderly clients are more likely to have foot and toenail problems since poor vision, lack of coordination, obesity, or inability to bend over may hinder them. It is common for an elderly person to have dry feet, as well they are more likely to suffer from conditions such as Diabetes, Heart or Kidney Failure and Strokes, all of which can contribute to foot and nail problems. This is the reason Home Support Workers are not permitted to provide foot care. It is recommended that foot care, for all elderly clients, be completed by a professional with special training in this area.

Clients should be taught about proper footwear. Socks can be worn to absorb perspiration. Footwear must always be clean to avoid infection. Women should be advised against wearing tight nylons that can constrict circulation. A person's shoe must not fit too tightly.

Equipment Needed:

- ✓ Washbasin
- ✓ Towel and washcloth
- ✓ Nail clippers, soft brush, emery board or nail file
- ✓ Lotion

Steps for Basic Nail Care

- Check with the office to ensure a special order is not required for the client's nail care.
- Explain the procedure to the client and wash your hands.
- Assist the client to a comfortable sitting position.
- Prepare a pan of warm soapy water and allow the client to soak feet or hands for 10 minutes. Wash feet and hands after soaking.
- Clean gently under nails with a soft brush and dry thoroughly.
- With nail clippers, clip fingernails straight across and even with tops of fingers. Shape nails with an emery board or nail file. Do **not** cut **toenails**.
- Apply lotion to client's feet if required, **never** between toes.
- Assist client to a comfortable position.
- Clean area and equipment.