

Personal Hygiene

Personal hygiene includes health practices such as bathing, washing your hair, brushing your teeth, and washing your clothes. Maintaining good personal hygiene helps fight infection by removing substances that allow bacteria to grow from the surface of your skin.

Regular brushing of your teeth keeps your mouth and gums healthy, so you can keep your breath odor free. Keeping your clothes and body clean makes you comfortable and makes it more pleasant for people around you.

Bathing/showering removes dirt, dead skin cells, and body odor. In the United States, most people bathe or shower daily or every other day. Bathing this often may not be the case in other countries or cultures. A person may not need a full bath or shower every day, but the face, underarms, and groin (area between the legs) should be kept clean daily. Wear clean underwear daily. Clothing should be washed or sent to a cleaner (some delicate fabrics need this) on a regular basis.

Body odor is commonly caused by a combination of perspiration and bacteria. Eating certain foods and spices, such as garlic, cumin and curry can also cause body odor. The armpit, groin and feet are the main areas from which body odor originates. Perspiration (sweating) is the body's way of cooling itself. The body also produces oils that protect skin from the environment (wind, sun, dry air). This oil traps dirt, dust, and dead cells. Soap helps dissolve and remove this oil from the skin and enables the oil to be washed away. Plain water is not able to do this.

HYGIENE PRODUCTS

There are several hygiene products you can buy at a grocery or drug store to help you maintain good personal hygiene. These products are not very expensive.

Deodorants & Antiperspirants

These products are used under the arms to decrease odor and sweat production. A deodorant is a substance that covers or absorbs odors. An antiperspirant makes the size of sweat and oil openings on the skin smaller, so a person does not produce as much sweat. Deodorants and antiperspirants are sold separately, or combined into one product.

Soaps

Soaps are used to wash the body. Soaps are made of materials that stick to oils and dead skin cells. When used with water, soap removes the oils and dead skin cells and cleans the skin.

Shampoos

When washing your hair, you use a shampoo designed for hair care. Shampoos are solutions of liquid soap, water, and a fragrance. Like soap, shampoo sticks to the oils on your hair and head and enables water to wash the oils off the head. Usually, you use shampoo for your hair and soap for your skin. There are some products that work for both your hair and body. Be sure to read the label on the bottle to see if you are buying shampoo (for your hair only) or a combined product (for your hair and body).

Toothpaste

Toothpaste is designed to clean the teeth, remove old food, and freshen the breath. There are several types of toothpaste. Some are flavored. You can choose whatever kind you want. They all serve the same purpose.

SCHEDULING AN APPOINTMENT

Call 275-2662 to schedule an appointment at the University Health Service (UHS). UHS offers a full range of services. All visits to UHS are confidential.

LINKS

www.hygieneexpert.co.uk

http://webhealthcentre.com/general/ph_index.asp