

Memory Care Tip

Bathing a person living with dementia is commonly the most challenging activity for both the patient and the caregiver. Confusion may peak if the patient doesn't understand what is happening and he or she may lack the ability to communicate simple needs such as raising the room or water temperature.

If a patient feels forced, if he has had a bad prior experience, if he is uncomfortable in any way, if he is tired—these are all common reasons that bath time becomes a battle.

Take extra care when assisting with bathing a person who has dementia. Try playing soft music of the patient's preference. If he feels forced (like he's not being treated like a person), if he has had a bad prior experience, if he is uncomfortable in any way (issues of modesty, temperature), if he is tired—these are all common reasons that bath time becomes a battle.

Especially in the disease's middle and late stages, the patient may forget the purpose of bathing. Gently coach with instructions such as, "Here's the shampoo for your hair," or "Use this soap for your arm pits." Demonstrating the action may help, too. ■



Assisting With Personal Hygiene

Caregivers may find that some of your time each day will be devoted to assisting the person in your care with personal hygiene. This includes bathing, shampooing, oral or mouth care, shaving, and foot care. Following are tips to help these tasks go smoothly.

Bathing

Ensure the floors are not slippery; to help prevent falls on the bathroom floor, use non-skid mats or rugs and a rubber mat with good suction or adhesive traction strips in the shower basin or bathtub. A movable shower head with a hose is especially helpful for patients who need help rinsing themselves.

- Before bringing the patient to the bathroom, gather all supplies, towels, and clean clothes.
- Make sure the room is a comfortable temperature; if it's too warm for you, it's probably about right for the patient.
- Assume modesty is of concern and cover the patient's private areas.
- Provide a shower stool, and pad it with towels for comfort.
- For showers, test and adjust the water temperature before the person gets in. Use gentle water pressure, as some patients are especially sensitive and even moderate pressure can be painful.
- For baths, some patients prefer to get into the tub before filling it with water. However, regulate the water temperature first. When finished, drain the tub before helping the patient exit.



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Hygiene *(Continued from page 1)*

- Assist in washing as needed, being sure to communicate what you need to do before actually touching the patient.
- When rinsing, move the water hose around the person rather than asking the person to move.
- Guide the person out of the shower or tub and wrap with a towel. A patient who is unsteady will benefit from sitting on a stool while you assist with drying and dressing.
- Never use an electric razor if the person is receiving oxygen because of the risk of fire if the electric razor sparks.

Nail Care

When providing nail care, watch for signs of irritation or infection. This is especially important for a person with diabetes, for whom a small infection can develop into something more serious. If other household members are using the same nail-grooming supplies, clean the shared items with alcohol.

- Assemble supplies—soap, basin with water, towel, nailbrush, scissors, nail clippers, file, and lotion.
- Wash your hands.
- Wash the hands and feet of the person in your care with soap and water and soak them in a basin of warm water for five minutes.
- Gently scrub the nails with the brush to remove trapped dirt.
- Dry the nails and gently push back the skin around the nails (the cuticle) with the towel.
- To prevent ingrown nails, cut nails straight across.
- File nails gently to smooth the edges.
- Gently massage hands and feet with lotion. ■



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Approximately 40% of the U.S. population chose to get a flu vaccine during the 2017-2018 flu season, and this prevented an estimated:

<p>7 million flu illnesses,</p>  <p>about the population of New York City.</p>	<p>109,000 flu hospitalizations,</p>  <p>about the number of vehicles crossing the Golden Gate Bridge each day.</p>	<p>8,000 flu deaths,</p>  <p>twice the number of hospitals in the United States.</p>
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Imagine the impact if more Americans chose to get a flu vaccine. Many more flu illnesses, flu hospitalizations and flu deaths could be prevented.

CDC.GOV/FLU



It's Time for Your Flu Shot

According to the Centers for Disease Control, people 65 years and older accounted for between 50 and 70 percent of reported influenza-associated hospitalizations.

Overall, flu hospitalization rates during the 2017–2018 flu season were the highest ever recorded. Vaccination is the single best way to help protect against the flu and is especially important for older adults. Flu vaccine saves lives and prevents the serious complications that sometimes result.

Caregivers of all ages should get an annual flu shot and should take preventive measures, such as washing hands, staying away from people who are sick, and encouraging others to cover their coughs. But be aware that these preventative steps cannot replace vaccination, which is still the best method of protection.

Urgent Warning Signs in Seniors With Influenza

You already know the common signs of influenza—body aches, sore throat, fever—but for people over age 65, it's especially important to keep a close eye for worsening symptoms. If any of the following are observed, it's time to seek urgent medical attention.

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath.
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen.
- Persistent dizziness, confusion, inability to arouse from sleep.
- Not urinating.
- Severe muscle pain.
- Severe weakness or unsteadiness.
- Fever or cough that improve but then return or worsen.
- Worsening of chronic medical conditions.
- Seizures. ■



QUICK QUIZ

Read the issue and answer True or False to the questions below.

1. During bathing, most patients want the bathroom air temperature to be very cool.

True or False

2. When assisting with a bath, be sure there are grab bars, a bath bench, and a rubber mat so the person doesn't slip.

True or False

3. When rinsing off soap, it's wisest to ask the patient to rotate in a circle to make the task easier.

True or False

4. To prevent ingrown nails, trim nails straight across.

True or False

5. Vaccination is the single best way to help protect against the flu.

True or False

6. As a caregiver, you may find that some of your time each day will be devoted to assisting the person in your care with personal hygiene.

True or False

7. It is not important to check the water temperature before the person gets in the bath or shower.

True or False

8. Accidents don't often happen in bathrooms.

True or False

9. To prevent scalding, set the hot water thermostat below 120° F.

True or False

10. Never use an electric razor if the person is on oxygen assistance because of the risk of causing a fire if the electric razor sparks.

True or False

Find the quiz answers on the bottom of page 4.

Skilled Nursing in the Comfort of Home

The same trusted name in Tri-Valley hospice care since 1980 also offers home health care for patients recovering from surgery or major illness, or who have chronic conditions that require skilled nursing. Our home health team helps you achieve your recovery goals by offering comprehensive care services, tailored to your individual needs. Hope's skilled professionals include:

- Home health nurses (RNs)
- Physical therapists
- Occupational therapists
- Speech and language pathologists
- Medical social workers
- Certified home health aides



Connect With Us

Reach out to learn more about Hope's home health or hospice care. We serve patients in homes and residential care facilities throughout the Tri-Valley and neighboring East Bay communities.

(925) 829-8770; HopeHospice.com



In-Service Training

Hope is dedicated to helping you, your patients, and their families. We can provide in-service education to doctors, nurses, and caregivers.

When patients and their loved ones are unfamiliar with hospice or home health care, our team provides free informational meetings and trainings. We want families to be well informed and comfortable with the choices they make.

As a non-profit agency that has served the Tri-Valley since 1980, we are committed to providing quality, compassionate care to all members of the community. Let us help you. Contact the Hope Outreach team today!

In-Service Training topics

- Working with dementia patients
- Pain in the elderly
- Skin care of the elderly
- Fall prevention
- Agitation/terminal restlessness
- Senior nutrition
- Medication administration
- Respiratory concerns
- MRSA/C-Diff
- Body mechanics

For More Information

How can Hope help your team? Contact our Director of Outreach, Kari Rayford, LVN, at (925) 829-8770 or karir@hopehospice.com.

We're Hiring! Hope is seeking skilled healthcare professionals to join our growing team. View current opportunities at hopehospice.com/careers.