

Hygiene Matters: Building Healthy Habits for Life

Have you ever noticed how good you feel when you get all cleaned up and put on fresh, clean clothes? There is a good reason for this feeling! The body performs better when it is clean and healthy. Good personal hygiene means having clean skin, taking care of your mouth/teeth, hair, ears, hands, feet, and nails!

Why is hygiene important?

Good personal hygiene can help prevent you or someone else from getting sick. Being in school or at work can affect not only your physical health, but your mental health as well. Practicing good hygiene can go a long way in protecting yourself and others from getting sick during what can already be a stressful time.



10 Basic Personal Hygiene Tips To Stay Healthy

- Wash your hands with soap and water often for at least 20 seconds! You don't know where other's hands have been. Did you know that germs can survive for up to three hours on your hands? Bacteria is everywhere! There are between 2 to 10 million bacteria on your fingertips and elbows.
- Keep your body clean by showering once a day! If you find that your skin is dry, find a body wash and moisturizer that best suits your type of skin and use as directed on the back of the container.
- Brush your hair every day and get haircuts when needed. Brushing your hair helps exfoliate the scalp, removing dead skin cells, excess natural oils, and debris. This will help prevent clogged hair follicles, which could impact future hair growth!
- Brush your teeth at least twice a day, and floss at least once a day. No one wants cavities or bad breath! Brushing your teeth will help remove plaque, stimulate the gums, and prevent bad breath. It is important to brush your teeth for at least two minutes, twice a day. This will help keep gums healthy and prevent gum disease.
- Wear deodorant or an antiperspirant. Body odor is a part of life. There are two types of deodorant. Deodorants cover up the smell of body odor, usually with fragrances whereas antiperspirants stop or dry up sweat. Everyone is different, so select the one that fits you best and follow the recommendations on the label on usage.
- Change your clothes regularly, including undergarments. Not only do you need to change your clothes regularly, but it is critical to toss them in the washing machine after every wear. This will help maintain clothing hygiene and decrease skin irritation. If you find that you have sensitive skin to detergents, talk with your health care provider and find a sensitive skin detergent that works best for you.
- Avoid habits that involve putting your hands into your mouth. This includes biting your fingernails. Did you know that repeatedly biting your fingernails can cause short-term dental problems, fungal infections in your nail bed, and illness?
- Wash your hair at least twice a week.
- Cough or sneeze into a tissue, your elbow, or shoulder.
- Taking care of scrapes and other injuries until they are healed. This means keeping them clean and covered.

Are there consequences of having poor hygiene? Yes! It can lead to foul body odor, oily skin, acne, and cavities. It can also lead to more troublesome and serious issues such as illness, infection, and heart disease. Poor personal hygiene can also affect your mental health and self-esteem.