Answer Guidance

# Chapter 32: Assisting people with their hygiene needs

## Activity answer guidance

### Activity 32.1

Compile a list of all of the measures you have undertaken to maintain your hygiene over the past week.

Why do you follow the routines you have included in your list?

Besides “clean,” how else do your preferred hygiene routines make you feel?

#### Answer guidance:

*You have been asked to compile a list of all of the measures you have undertaken to maintain your hygiene over the past week. This might include:*

• *Teeth brushing*

• *Washing and bathing*

• *Wearing deodorant*

• *Washing your clothes*

• *Trimming your nails*

• *Washing your hair*

• *Washing your hands*

• *Shaving*

Why do you follow the routines you have included in your list?

*This is most likely to maintain your dignity, feel clean and healthy, prevent infection, appear presentable, and prevent a smell.*

Besides “clean,” how else do your preferred hygiene routines make you feel?

*You might say that they have a positive impact on your mental health, make you feel awake, give you pride, and make you feel professional and “smart.”*

### Activity 32.2

Either reflect on an experience where you have needed a nurse to assist you to maintain your hygiene or imagine this situation:

What behaviours do you think are important for the nurse to demonstrate as they assist you?

What behaviours do you think are important for the nurse to demonstrate as they assist you?

#### Answer guidance:

*You have been asked to either reflect on an experience where you have needed a nurse to assist you to maintain your hygiene or imagine this situation:*

*Professionalism, maintaining privacy and dignity, being caring, being knowledgeable, and having the correct skills, to demonstrate empathy.*

### Activity 32.3

For this activity, either another student or a friend or family member is needed to assist.

Ask your assistant if you can clean their teeth and then if they will clean your teeth:

 How did it feel when you were cleaning your assistant’s teeth?

 What did it feel like having someone else clean your teeth?

 How will you apply what you have learned from this experience to your practice?

#### Answer guidance:

*For this activity, you have been asked to find either another student or a friend or family member to assist. Using Clinical skill 32.4 as a guide, ask your assistant if you can clean their teeth and then if they will clean your teeth:*

How did it feel when you were cleaning your assistant’s teeth?

*It might feel very strange brushing someone else’s teeth. There might be too much or too little toothpaste, too much or too little water. You might worry about being too harsh and hurting them, or making them want to gag. You might worry about being too gentle and then they feel their teeth aren’t clean. Because you can’t feel anything!*

What did it feel like having someone else clean your teeth?

*You might feel self-conscious and quite vulnerable doing such a personal task with an observer. It might feel pretty uncomfortable and not “the way you usually do it.” You might feel claustrophobic because you can’t control the amount of water and toothpaste.*

How will you apply what you have learned from this experience to your practice?

You will most likely be more aware of how your patient is feeling and be sure to ask them questions like how much toothpaste they like to use, and when they would like a drink of water. You might even ask how much they can do independently if you can gather the equipment for them, rather than assuming and just doing the whole task for them. You might be more aware of maintaining their dignity by helping to wipe paste from around their mouth, etc.

## Case study answer guidance

### Case Study 32.1: Adam

Adam is 25, has a moderate learning disability, and lives in a supported living home. While returning from shopping four days ago, he was hit by a car and sustained fractures of both wrists, which have been immobilised in a plaster cast. He also has a severely sprained left ankle, on which he is unable to bear weight, which is being treated with analgesia, rest, elevation, and ice packs. Adam has numerous contusions and a cut over his right eye, which was sutured. He came home from the hospital yesterday and is in bed because he says he “feels wobbly.” Adam is desperate to have a bath and shave because he says he “pongs like the hospital.” Normally, he needs minimal assistance with hygiene, but he now needs full assistance.

How are you going to assist Adam to maintain his hygiene in a manner he finds acceptable?

Which of the step-by-step clinical skills guides in this chapter would be relevant for Adam’s care, and would you need to make any modifications to these?

What will be your priority and what additional assessments will you undertake?

#### Answer guidance:

How are you going to assist Adam to maintain his hygiene in a manner he finds acceptable?

*In order to assist Adam in maintaining his hygiene in a manner he finds acceptable it is necessary to discuss with him what he would like to do and how he would like to do it. Encouraging and assisting any patient to maintain their usual routine, enabling them to be as independent and feel as in control as possible, is an important aspect of every nurse’s role. However, as indicated in the case study, Adam has sustained a range of injuries that mean he is unable, at present, to be able to follow his normal routine.*

If you apply each stage of **“CLEAN”** you would:

 **C**onsider and assess Adam’s needs

o What are his exact personal hygiene needs at the moment?

o Exactly how much assistance does he require at the moment?

 **L**isten to the patient’s preferences and devise a plan

o How does Adam want his hygiene needs to be met?

o Does Adam have any religious/cultural issues we need to consider?

o Adam is not able to go to the bathroom at present, so we will need to assist him to meet his hygiene needs whilst he is in bed.

o Adam must consent to the care we are providing and ensuring he is safe during this is of fundamental importance. Because Adam feels “wobbly” we would need to consider his safety needs (see questions 2 and 3 for more details). If at any point we were uncertain what was appropriate for Adam’s care we would ask for advice.

 **E**nvironmental and equipment factors

o Are we able to safely meet Adam’s hygiene needs in his current environment, or does he need additional care?

o Will Adam’s additional needs at the present put any of those caring for him at risk, for example, can Adam’s bed be made sufficiently accessible and at an appropriate height to ensure we care for our backs?

o Do we have all the equipment we need, including Adam’s toiletries?

 **A**ssistance

o Provide Adam with the care he requires. See question 2 for further details.

 **N**owledge and skills

Whilst providing Adam’s care is there any information we would tell him to ensure that he can continue to maintain his hygiene needs until he is recovered?

*Caring for Adam in this way would enable us to promote his independence as far as is possible at the present, take account of his preferences, treat him as an individual and maintain his dignity. It is our role not just to assist Adam to maintain his hygiene to keep him physically clean, but also for personal, social, and psychological reasons.*

Which of the step-by-step clinical skills guides would be relevant for Adam’s care? Would you need to make any modifications to these?

*The step-by-step clinical skills guides appropriate to Adam’s care would be:*

 *Bathing a patient in bed*

 *Shaving*

 *Teeth brushing*

*Although Adam has only mentioned having a wash and a shave it would be an opportunity to ask him whether he would also like to clean his teeth.*

*The modifications you would need to make to these would be similar for all three activities. Adam has told us that he feels “wobbly,” so be very careful when asking him to move or sit up. If he can manage to tolerate sitting up in bed, resting on a couple of pillows, without feeling too “wobbly,” shaving and cleaning his teeth will need to be done in* *this position. If Adam is not able to sit up at all, shaving and cleaning his teeth can be done whilst he is flat. As Adam has plaster casts on his wrists he will only have very limited, if any ability to use his hands to perform activities for himself, so you will need to perform these for him.*

*It would be sensible to ask Adam if he would find his care more acceptable if, rather than doing everything in one go, you spread the procedures out over a period of time, so he could rest in between.*

What will be your priority and what additional assessments will you undertake?

*Your priority would be to maintain Adam’s safety. To ensure this you would make sure he could tolerate each of the procedures without feeling too “wobbly” or causing additional pain. You would also need to make sure that those delivering his care were not being put at risk, from, for example, a back injury.*

*You would need to constantly assess whether Adam was feeling “wobbly” due to the hygiene procedures, and offer frequent rests. Whilst assisting him to maintain his hygiene you would also assess:*

 *the condition of his skin*

 *the many contusions he has sustained*

 *the cut over his right eye*

 *that his plaster casts were not rubbing*

 *the condition of his left ankle*

 *that Adam was receiving sufficient analgesia and was not in pain.*

### Case Study 32.2: Mohammed

Mohammed is 3 and attends a local nursery four days each week. After lunch, he asks to clean his teeth, as he recently went for his first dentist appointment and was told this is important.

Using the relevant clinical skill guide as a resource, what are the important health education points to stress to Mohammed?

#### Answer guidance:

*Using the teeth brushing clinical skill guide, the important health education points you would want to stress to Mohammed would be that:*

 *he should clean his teeth before breakfast, after meals, and at bedtime*

 *holding the brush at 45 degrees and using small circular motions, starting with his upper teeth, brushing all surfaces, and paying extra attention to the area where his teeth and gums meet is the most effective way to clean his teeth.*

How could you do this in a way he understands?

 *making a chart with Mohammed which indicates breakfast, meals, and bedtime with space for him to draw a picture of a toothbrush whenever he cleans his teeth*

 *use a suitable soft toy/doll and a toothbrush to show Mohammed how he should clean his teeth and then get him to practise on the soft toy/doll.*

### Case Study 32.3: Josette

Josette is 52 and has a long history of severe depression. The community mental health nurse has visited Josette at home today and finds her looking dishevelled. Her clothes are stained and smell of sweat, her hair is greasy and matted and her fingernails are long and dirty.

What would your priorities be in assisting Josette to maintain her hygiene?

How will you assist Josette to maintain her hygiene in a manner she finds acceptable?

What additional issues do you need to consider due to the setting of her care?

#### Answer guidance:

What would your priorities be in assisting Josette to maintain her hygiene?

 *ensuring that her dishevelled state is due to her depression rather than another cause, such as a physical illness that is limiting her ability to care for herself*

 *devising a plan to enable Josette to be assisted to maintain her hygiene in a manner she finds acceptable that supports her current independence and control.*

How will you assist Josette to maintain her hygiene in a manner she finds acceptable?

*In order to assist Josette in maintaining her hygiene in a manner she finds acceptable it is necessary to discuss with her what she would like to do and how she would like to do it. Encouraging and assisting any patient to maintain their usual routine, enabling them to be as independent and feel as in control as possible, is an important aspect of every nurse’s role. However, as indicated in the case study, Jane has a history of depression which may result in her required assistance to maintain her hygiene.*

*If you apply each stage of* ***“CLEAN”*** *(chapter 32) you would:*

 ***C****onsider and assess Josette’s needs*

o *What are her exact personal hygiene needs at the moment?*

o *Exactly how much assistance does she require at the moment?*

 ***L****isten to the patient’s preferences and devise a plan*

o *How does Josette want her hygiene needs to be met?*

o *Does Josette have any religious/cultural issues we need to consider?*

o *Is Josette happy to go to her bathroom for a bath or shower?*

o *Josette must consent to the care we wish to provide and her safety is of fundamental importance. Josette’s reduced ability to maintain her hygiene may also indicate that she is not taking care of herself in other ways, such as preparing and cooking meals, so we would also assess this at an appropriate time.*

 ***E****nvironmental and equipment factors*

o *Are we able to safely meet Josette’s hygiene needs in her current environment, or does she need additional care?*

o *Will Josette’s additional needs at the present put any of those caring for her at risk, for example, can we deliver the care Josette requires within her home whilst abiding by manual handling guidelines?*

o *Do we have all the equipment we need?*

 ***A****ssistance*

o *Provide Josette with the care she requires.*

 ***N****owledge and skills*

o *Whilst providing Josette’s care is there any information we would tell her to ensure that she can continue to maintain her hygiene needs until she recovers?*

o *Caring for Josette in this way would enable us to promote her independence as far as is possible at the present, take account of her preferences, treat her as an individual and maintain her dignity.*

What additional issues do you need to consider due to the setting of her care?

*As we are caring for Josette in her own home, we may need to consider whether her needs can be safely met, as we are unlikely to have access to a wide range of additional equipment. We would also need to assess whether Josette was able to remain within her home, or whether her lack of ability to maintain her hygiene was a sign that her condition had deteriorated sufficiently for her to need a level of care that could not be delivered in this care setting.*

### Case Study 32.4: Daisy

Daisy is twenty-seven and is a patient in an orthopaedic ward. She has been on strict bed rest for the last three days following surgery on her back. Daisy normally washes her hair every day and says that not being able to do this is making her feel “really unclean,” because it looks “greasy, messy, and dirty.” Daisy has shoulder-length hair, which has been in a plait since her operation, which now looks untidy, greasy, and lank. Daisy’s family has brought her favourite hair shampoo, conditioner, and styling products, plus her brush and comb to the ward, and Daisy has asked whether her hair can be washed today.

What actions would you take before agreeing to wash Daisy’s hair?

What equipment would you need to wash Daisy’s hair?

How would you wash her hair whilst she is on bed rest and how should it be cared for on a daily basis?

#### Answer guidance:

What actions would you take before agreeing to wash Daisy’s hair?

*Before agreeing to wash Daisy’s hair it is necessary to ensure that doing this will not cause any potential problems following her recent surgery, and that she is able to move her neck freely and tolerate the procedure, without being in pain.*

What equipment would you need to wash Daisy’s hair?

 *Bed hair-rinser*

 *towel x3*

 *large incontinence pads*

 *Daisy’s shampoo, conditioner, and styling products*

 *brush and comb*

 *bowl x2*

 *warm water*

 *jug*

 *mirror*

 *hairdryer if local policy allows*

How would you wash her hair whilst she is on bed rest and how should it be cared for on a daily basis?

*Daisy’s hair should be washed following the “Step by step clinical skill: Washing a patient’s hair (in bed).” As Daisy is being cared for in an acute ward setting it is likely that you will be able to arrange her bed space with minimal effort to enable you to follow the procedure and set the height of her bed to care for your back.*

*Caring for Daisy’s hair on a daily basis involves brushing and combining it daily, plus other times as required, styling it as she desires, and shampooing it as needed to ensure it remains clean. Brushing and combing Daisy’s hair should be part of her routine care, as this will not only make her feel better but also stimulates circulation, distributes natural oils evenly, and removes dust. Always handle her hair gently when brushing and combing, if the hair is thick divide it into sections and work on one area at a time. Observe the appearance of her scalp and hair whilst you are doing this and always clean the comb or brush after using them, remembering only to use her brush and comb, never to share.*