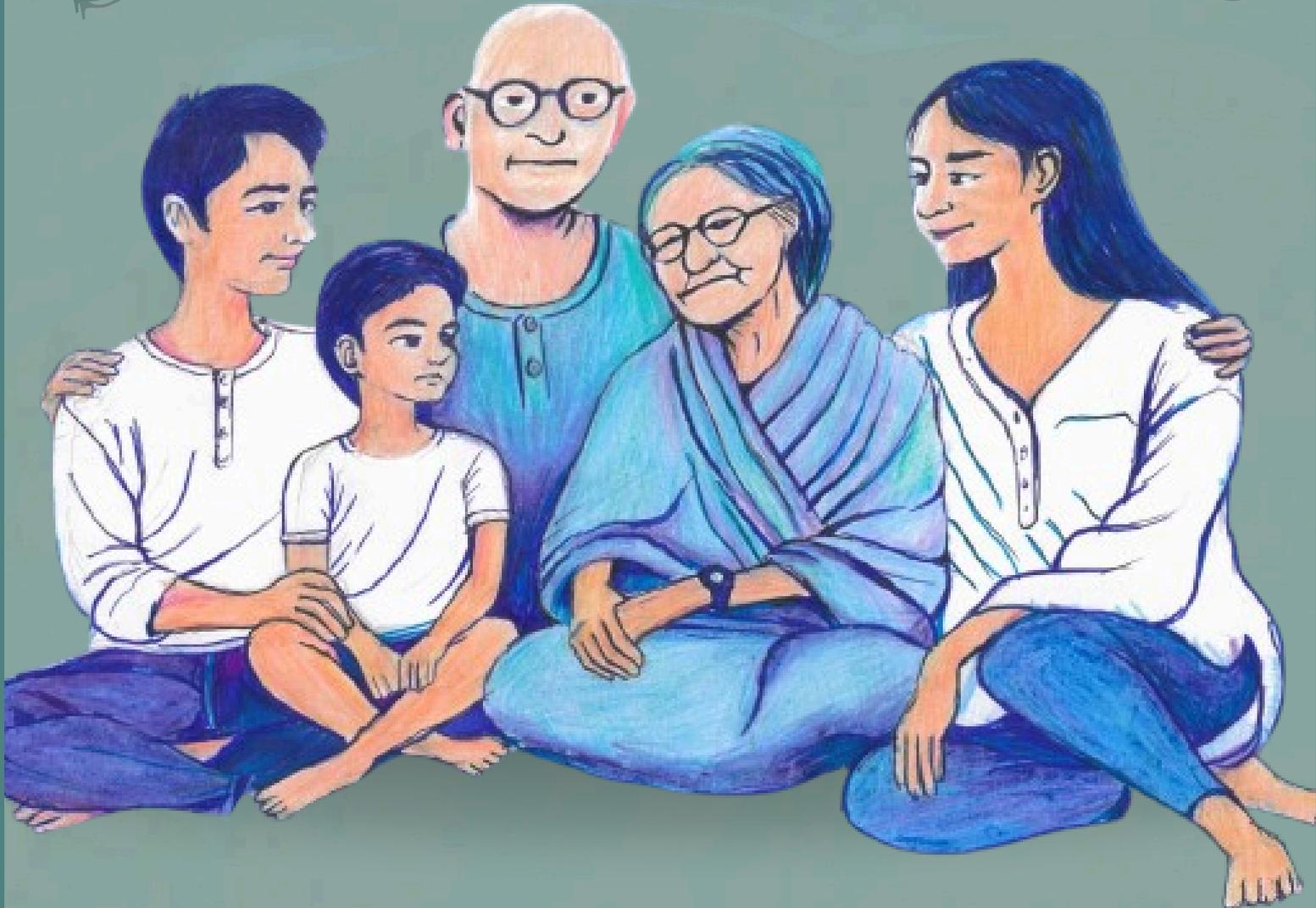




CAREGIVER

“Supporting your loved ones through their journey”

SPECIAL NEEDS™



Professional Insights ★ Community Voices ★ Upcoming Events

MAINTAINING PERSONAL HYGIENE

DR. JANAKI BALAKRISHNAN



Often we see personal hygiene is not given so much importance when it comes to individuals with special needs. As most of them are unable to care their own body cleanliness and hygiene, it becomes an arduous task for the caregivers to maintain their child's body hygiene.

The most important aspects of personal hygiene is bathing. Cleaning one's body from head to toe, helps prevent the spread of germs and keeps the skin healthy. Ensuring privacy and comfort, bathing should become integral part of the daily routine. Choosing the right temperature of the water, use of mild soap and pat dry after bath are critical to comfort bathing. Bathing can be an excellent way of relaxing and enjoying some quiet time.

Specifically, washing of the genital and anal area is an

important part of bathing. Termed as 'Private Parts', this region is an easy target for germs to flourish as it is warm and damp always. Gentle thorough cleansing with mild soap and warm water is recommended. Abrasive cleansers or harsh scrubbing or douching should be avoided. Proper care of the private parts prevents infection, irritation or dry skin and odours.

While body bathing can be carried out twice a day depending on the activity and perspiration level of the individual, skin care and healthcare professionals recommend that the face, underarms and genitals are cleansed once a day and not more often, as this can take essential natural oils away from the skin leading to irritation.

However, hand washing should be carried out frequently throughout the day, as they come into contact with many potentially harmful bacteria. Studies suggest that hand washing can be carried out as many as 6-10 times a day to help prevent infections. This can be taught as a ritual to practice throughout the day: before and after meals, and after toilet visits.

Nails are easier to trim and clean right after soaking or bathing. Clipping straight across with nail clipper;

shaping the finger nails with nail file and applying lotion or petroleum jelly to the area are important procedures. Using personal equipment or sanitizing before using it on others is safe and best. Cleaned and trimmed fingernails and toenails are important to prevent infection, injury and odours. Also, examining for hangnails, ingrown nails and nails torn away from the skin is important as it may cause skin breaks and broken nails can snag clothing or scratch the skin.

A good body care and hygiene helps to

- Prevent Illness and infection from bacteria or viruses
- Eliminates body odor/irritation/skin chafing
- Maintains health
- Promotes physical, psychological and social well being
- Facilitates social interactions and relationships

PERSONAL HYGIENE HACKS

FRESH START, FRESH UNDIES

Swap out innerwear every three months for top-notch hygiene! A fresh set of 4-6 pieces keeps things clean and comfy.

1

SNIP SMART!

Trim nails right after a bath when they're soft. A small nail cutter ensures safer hands! Got minor cuts? A saltwater rinse to the rescue!

2

3

EAT RIGHT, STAY BRIGHT

Fruits, veggies, and water are the ultimate health boosters! Even picky eaters need balanced meals for better energy and digestion.

4

5

PICTURE THIS!

Cue cards are lifesavers for autistic and special needs kids. They make hygiene routines fun and easy to follow!

6

7

TRIM, DON'T STRIP!

Pubic hair is there for a reason! Trimming > Shaving > Waxing. Keep it neat, not bare!

8

9

GOT MORE QUESTIONS?

Email the Caregivers' Advocacy, and we'll get expert answers for you!

10

11

SCRUB-A-DUB-DUB

Bathing is non-negotiable! Wash your hair at least once a week (or use dry shampoo for a quick fix!). Noticed white patches or an itchy scalp? Time to see a doctor!

MOVE IT OR LOSE IT

Bedridden kids need frequent repositioning to prevent sores. Change positions often!

EYE-EAR-NOSE TLC

- ✨ Eyes: Wipe from the inside out for a clean, fresh look.
- ✨ Ears: Clean only the outer flap—no deep dives!
- ✨ Nose: A gentle wipe, no digging!

PERIOD POWER

Track it! A menstrual calendar helps kids predict and prepare. Associative learning fosters independence in managing periods!

CLEAN IT RIGHT!

- ♂ For Boys: Gently retract the foreskin and clean with a soft cloth. No harsh washing!
- ♀ For Girls: Normal discharge is white. If it's yellow or green, it's time for a check-up!

Thanks for tuning in! Stay fresh, stay healthy!

HELPING WITH ACTIVITIES OF DAILY LIVING: PERSONAL HYGIENE

MS. ESTHER KANTHI - EXPERT

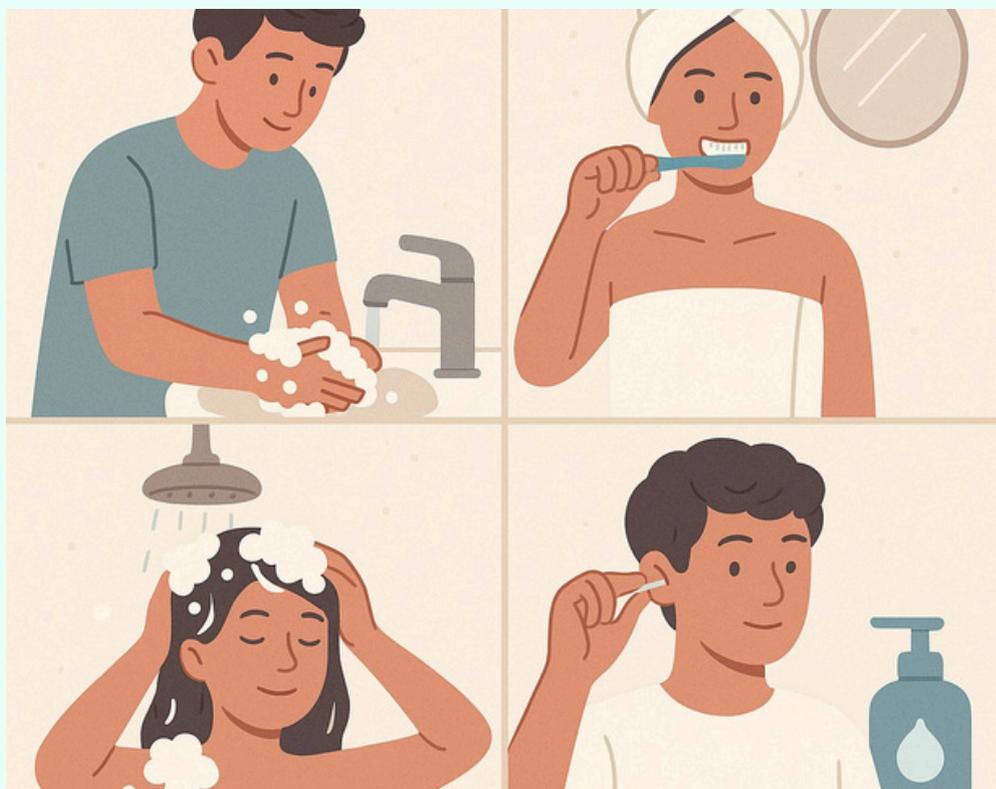
MRS. UMA SRIDHAR AND MRS. KAUSALYA MURALI - CAREGIVER PERSPECTIVES

DR. JANAKI BALAKRISHNAN AND MRS. MALEEKA RIYAZ - CAREGIVER ADVOCACY GROUP

The following is a summary of the panel discussion from the Caregiver Advocacy Group's sixth session. Moderated by Ms. Maleeka Riyaz, Counselling Psychologist, the session focused on helping with activities of daily living: personal hygiene of children with special needs and ways to support them. Based on predetermined questions, the discussion was directed to the panel members, and their responses are summarized below.

How do we manage to cut the nails for hypersensitive children

challenging due to their heightened sensitivity to touch, textures, or sounds. What seems like a simple task to us can feel overwhelming to them. The key is to prepare them using desensitization techniques before attempting to cut their nails. Engaging them in activities like squeezing squishy balls, playing with soft or spiky sensory toys, gentle fingertip massages, or alternating their hands in warm and cold water can help reduce sensitivity and make them more comfortable. Additionally, since many children with autism are visual learners, using cue cards or a step-by-step visual schedule



can make the process more predictable and less stressful. Simple visuals showing actions like sitting at a table, turning on a light, holding the nail cutter, and cutting one nail at a time can help them understand what to expect.

How do we handle HYGIENE issues during the monthly cycle of girls or even specifically bed ridden persons

A menstrual calendar helps track cycles in advance, making it easier to plan and avoid discomfort. For autistic children, cue cards and task analysis—breaking down steps

like opening a pad, sticking it in place, and disposing of it—can make learning more accessible. Proper hygiene includes changing pads every 4-6 hours to prevent infections, cleaning the area with water and drying it before wearing a fresh pad, and using cotton underwear, which should be washed with soap and dried in direct sunlight to kill germs. If rashes occur, coconut oil or a skin barrier cream can provide relief. Practicing these steps outside the menstrual cycle helps children with autism become more independent. With the right preparation and guidance, menstrual hygiene can be managed smoothly, ensuring comfort and dignity.

To prevent infections and skin irritation in bedridden individuals or children with special needs,

maintaining proper hygiene, regular repositioning, breathable clothing, and good nutrition is essential. A daily bath with a mild antiseptic solution helps prevent bacterial and fungal infections, while moisture-prone areas like the groin, armpits, and neck must be dried thoroughly. Avoid applying oils or moisturizers in these areas, but bony areas may need light moisturizing to prevent dryness. Repositioning every two hours helps prevent pressure sores, and ensuring clean, wrinkle-free bedding minimizes friction-related rashes. Wet sheets and full diapers should be changed promptly to maintain hygiene. Wearing loose, breathable cotton clothing allows proper air circulation, reducing the risk of rashes and discomfort. Additionally, a balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and plenty of water supports skin health and immunity. Gentle cleansing between baths with a soft, damp cloth can further help maintain hygiene.

Are there alternatives to keep the hair clean other than washing with shampoo?

Keeping hair short makes maintenance easier, reducing itchiness and discomfort.

While applying oil is common, it can make hair sticky and require frequent washing; hair serums are a lighter alternative. Combing hair twice a day helps remove dirt and tangles, while washing at least once a week with a mild shampoo ensures cleanliness. Dry shampoo is another effective option for those who find regular washing difficult. When choosing a shampoo, one that lathers well helps remove dirt effectively. Additionally, opting for simple hairstyles prevents hair from getting tangled, making grooming easier.

To manage fungal and bacterial infections in covered areas like the underarms and private parts, it's essential to identify whether it's a normal condition or an infection. While mild body odour is common and can be managed with hygiene and deodorants, an unusually strong smell, white patches, excessive dryness, or scaly skin may indicate a fungal infection, whereas bacterial infections often appear as red rashes, boils, or lumps that develop into sores with yellow discharge. Preventing and managing these infections requires keeping the affected areas clean and dry. Regular washing, using antiseptic powders, creams, or sprays, and ensuring proper ventilation can help. Wearing loose, breathable clothing and applying a light dusting of powder can absorb sweat and prevent irritation. If symptoms persist or worsen, medical attention may be necessary, including oral medication.

Practicing good hygiene, changing damp clothes quickly, and avoiding excessive covering of these areas can significantly reduce the risk of infections and promote faster healing.

Can you please give tips to keep the eyes, nose and ears clean?

For eyes, gently wipe them with a soft cotton cloth dipped in warm water, moving from the inner corner outward. Avoid soap and tissue paper. Children with glasses should clean them regularly. Signs of infection include redness, irritation, or discharge, requiring medical attention. For dry eyes, moisture drops can help.

For nose, teach children to blow gently to avoid harm. Saline nasal drops help clear blockages. If a child has a feeding tube, it should be changed every seven days. For regular cleaning, use a damp cloth to wipe away mucus or crusts.

For ears, avoid cotton buds as ears self-clean. Use a damp cloth to wipe the outer ear and folds. Wax usually clears naturally, but excessive buildup can be treated with wax-softening drops. Swallowing helps relieve blockages. Hearing aids should be cleaned and maintained regularly.

How to remove hairs from private parts,

for example around groin, scrotum, etc. Removing hair from private areas like the

groin and scrotum is a personal choice, not a necessity. If a child wishes to remove hair, trimming with scissors or clippers is the safest option, reducing discomfort while minimizing infection risks. Shaving can expose hair follicles to urine and stool, increasing the chance of infections, especially in children wearing diapers. Waxing is strongly discouraged due to its harshness on delicate skin. If removal is necessary, trimming is the best approach, while shaving should be done with caution and proper care to protect open follicles.

How to maintain hygiene in private parts?

For Boys:

The foreskin covers the tip of the penis and is retractable. It should be gently pulled back and cleaned regularly to prevent the buildup of smegma—a mix of dead skin and oils that can cause infections. For circumcised boys, regular washing with water is enough. Boys who cannot clean themselves should be assisted during baths. A rubber sheet or plastic cover can be placed under the body for convenience while cleaning.

For Girls:

Menstrual hygiene is crucial. During periods, girls should wash with soap and water each time they change their sanitary pads. Even outside menstruation, some white

discharge is normal, but if it appears curd-like, yellow, green, or blood-stained, it may indicate an infection requiring medical attention. Wearing breathable cotton underwear and changing them at least once or twice a day is important. Undergarments should be washed with soap and hot water and dried in direct sunlight to kill germs, as shade drying may not be effective.

Is conditioner washing recommended for special children?

Conditioner washing, which involves using conditioner instead of shampoo, can give hair a polished look but does not effectively remove dirt from the scalp. A proper shampoo wash is essential at least once a week to cleanse the scalp, though a conditioner wash can be used in between if frequent washing is needed. For special needs children, the focus should be on maintaining cleanliness and preventing infections rather than unnecessary conditioning. If shampooing is required, using a mild or baby shampoo is best. For children who cannot be bathed in the usual way, bedside hair washing can be done by laying them down with their head slightly raised on a towel or rubber sheet and carefully washing their hair while keeping their face dry. If assistance is needed, one person can support the child while another washes. After washing, gently towel dry or

use a blow dryer if necessary. Keeping hair short is often a more manageable option for special needs children, making regular care easier.

What is dry shampoo?

Dry shampoo is a spray-based alternative to liquid shampoo, designed to absorb excess oil and dirt from the scalp without the need for water. Unlike traditional shampoos that require rinsing, dry shampoo is simply sprayed onto the hair, making it a convenient option for those who cannot wash their hair frequently. It is commonly used in Western countries and is becoming increasingly available in other regions. Some people alternate between liquid and dry shampoo to reduce the frequency of hair washing while maintaining cleanliness. However, while dry shampoo helps freshen up the hair, it does not provide the deep cleansing effect of a regular shampoo wash.

Do we really need to wear gloves and masks while cleaning bed ridden special child?

Wearing gloves and masks while caring for bedridden children, especially during diaper changes and cleaning, is not mandatory but depends on personal comfort and hygiene preferences. As caregivers, we often handle tasks with bare hands, much like we do in our daily routines. However, if a third person were assisting or if the situation involved a hospital setting,

The key is proper hygiene—discard used diapers immediately and wash hands thoroughly with soap. If the smell is too strong or the mess

is excessive, wearing gloves and a mask can help, but it remains a personal choice. Using an apron for extra protection is also an option.

Ultimately, it depends on individual comfort and the level of cleanliness required in each situation.

Important personal hygiene checklist

1. Brushes teeth
2. Washes hands/face
3. Bathes self
4. Wipes/blows nose
5. Urinates in toilet
6. Has bowel movement in toilet
7. Washes or wipes self after toileting
8. Washes hands after toileting
9. Wears clean clothing
10. Washes and grooms the hair.
11. Shaves or trims body hair.
12. Washes the external genital area
13. Changes pads regularly during menstruation
14. Cleans under the penis foreskin regularly

அன்றொரு நாள்

ஓர் ஆவணி அவிட்டந்தன்னில்
அரும்பிச் சிரித்தது - அழகு மலர்
விடிந்தும் விடியாத காலையில்
மலர்ந்து மலராது - பாதி மலரானது ஏன்?
சின்னந் சிறு மலர் செய்த குற்றமா?
மலரைச் சுமந்த மனம் செய்த குற்றமா?
காலத்தின் கோலமா?
கர்மவினை என்னும் சதியா?
ஏனிந்த கதி? இங்கு விதி ஏன் விலக்கு பெற்றது?
ஊமை கண்ட கனவாய் - குழம்பித் தவித்து
நிலை ஏதும் புரியாது - கற்சிலை ஆனது,
பேதை தாய் மனம்.

பின்பு

கடைவிழி ஓரம்வழி நீரில் - வழி தேடி
தடை பல தாண்டி - நடை போட்டு,
சில பொழுது நெடு வீர்ப்பிலும்(பெரு மூச்சு)
பல பொழுது திட நோக்கும் கொண்டு
அன்றாட வாழ்வு தரும் அனுபவமே

ஆண்டவன் தரிசனம் எனும்
நிதர்சன நிஜம் கண்டு கொண்டு
மாற்றுதிறன் உள்ள பிள்ளையால்
இன்று வாழ்வின் நிறை கண்டு
பல துன்பம் பாய்ந்து வரினும்
நிலை பெற்ற நிம்மதி கதவு - என்றும்
நிச்சயம் திறந்திருக்கும் என்னும் - தெளிவு
கண்டது.
எதையும் தாங்கும் இதயம் எனக்களித்த
என் ஐஸ்வர்யமே -
என் உயிர் உள்ளவரை -
உன் போலுள்ள -
கள்ளமில்லா கண் மணிகளுக்கு
சேவை செய்ய என்னை பணித்தருளே!

கிரிஜா ஸ்ரீராம்
ஆகஸ்ட் 1977

CREATIVE ARTS



Drawing by

Yogesh, Nava Jyothi Trust



Photoshop by

Aishwarya

--UPCOMING EVENTS--

ADL - Dental care **Sub Series : Oral hygiene**

ZOOM MEETING

Meeting ID: 858 5714 1348

Passcode: 387170

APRIL
29
2025

YOUTUBE LIVE

[www.youtube.com/@
CaregiverAdvocacyGroup](http://www.youtube.com/@CaregiverAdvocacyGroup)

TIME: 7.00PM - 8.00PM

Planning Financial Costs of Cancer Treatment

ZOOM MEETING

Meeting ID: 847 6879 8778

Passcode: 405285

MAY
6
2025

YOUTUBE LIVE

[www.youtube.com/@
CaregiverAdvocacyGroup](http://www.youtube.com/@CaregiverAdvocacyGroup)

TIME: 6.00PM - 7.00PM

--COLLABORATORS--



--ACKNOWLEDGEMENT--

We extend our deepest gratitude to Ms. Esther Kanthi, Ms. Uma Sridhar, Ms. Kausalya Murali, a caregiver, for sharing her empowering journey as a guest speaker in our webinar. Her courage, resilience, and dedication have touched the hearts of many, offering hope and strength to those facing similar challenges. We are truly honored to have had her as part of our event and are thankful for her invaluable contribution.

Scan Me

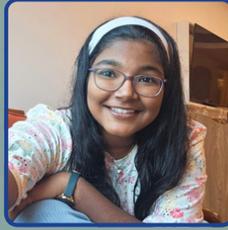


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